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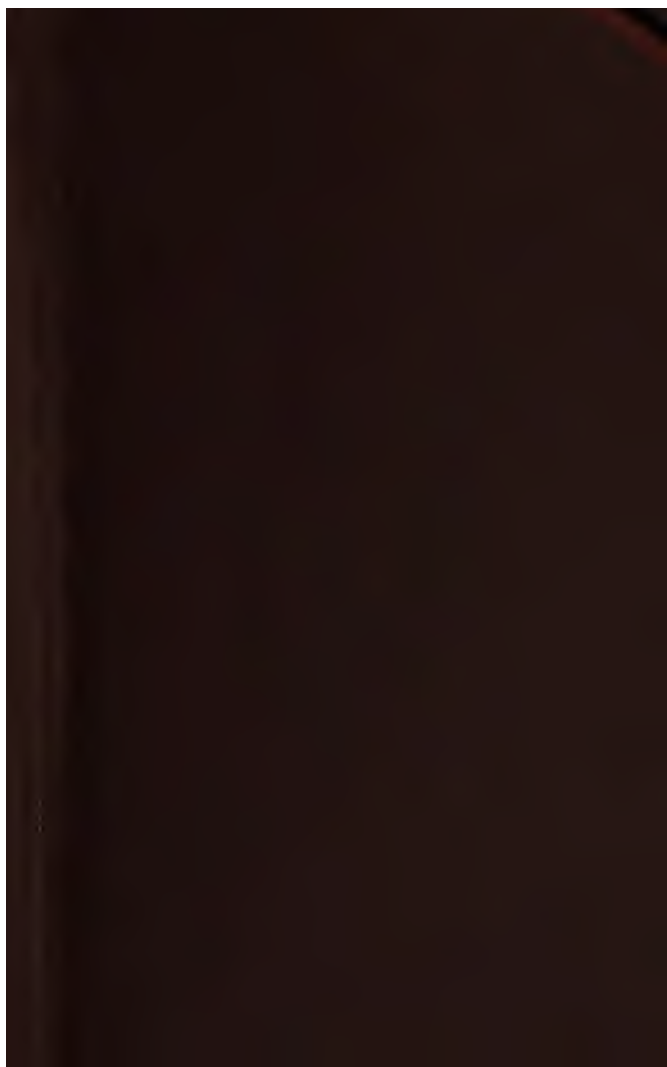
A BOOK OF



MEDITATIONS



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A BOOK
OF
MEDITATIONS.

A B O O K
OF
MEDITATIONS:

BEING A MANUAL OF DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS
INTENDED AS HELPS TO THE SPIRITUAL
LIFE OF ORDINARY CHRISTIANS.

BY THE REV. EDWARD COLLETT.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be alway
acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my Strength and my Redeemer.

LONDON:
BEMROSE AND SONS, 10, PATERNOSTER
BUILDINGS; AND IRONGATE, DERBY.
1874.



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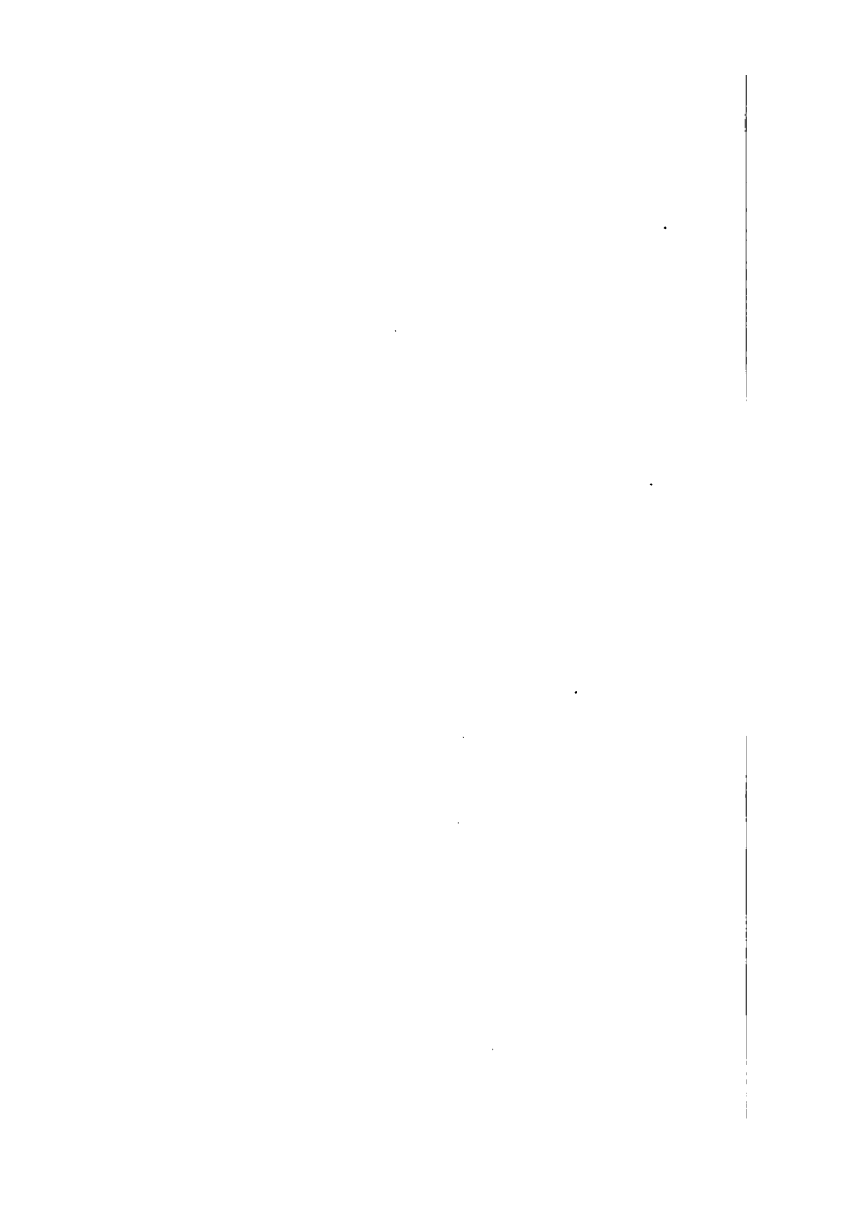
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To
THE SACRED MEMORY
OF
Many Faithful Souls,
WHO
HAVE CHANGED THEIR MEDITATIONS OF GOD
INTO
VISIONS OF HIS BEAUTY,
THE AUTHOR
DEDICATES THIS LITTLE BOOK,
IN THE HOPE AND PRAYER THAT IT MAY HELP
BOTH YOU AND HIM
TO JOIN THEM
HEREAFTER.



TO THE READER.

BUT a very few words will suffice to explain the plan of this little book, and to point out the way in which it is intended to be used.

1. Each Meditation is arranged to extend over one week. It may therefore either be used on *one* occasion, or (by attention to its division into *paragraphs*) it may be spread over each of the seven days of a week.

2. Each of the paragraphs is divided into three parts. This is not always because of a fresh idea being then proposed, but to allow the soul to contemplate and *expand* the foregoing thoughts, and to adapt them to its own individual circumstances. The verses at the end of the volume should be repeated at each *pause* in the *daily* portions; or at the end of each *paragraph*, when a whole meditation is used at a time.

3. It must be remembered that the object of this book is *only to help* in the practice of regular meditation, and not to supersede any independent action of the soul. Therefore, to make it of *any* use at all, it must be accompanied by an abundance of devout *prayer* and serious thought.

4. It will be observed that there are a sufficient number of Meditations to last for one quarter of the year. Should the reader find that a continuation of the work would be useful to him, he is requested to communicate with the Author, through the Publishers; and, provided that a sufficient support be given to this first part, other similar volumes will follow in due course.



Give glory to God.



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A

BOOK OF MEDITATIONS.

PRELIMINARY.

ON THE NECESSARY ACCOMPANIMENT TO MEDITATION.

IT will hardly be necessary to say to most persons who use this book, that meditation is not so much, or so entirely, an exercise of the mind, as it is a *prayerful* putting of oneself into the presence of God, to listen to His voice and return an answer. There will not be a real and hearty appreciation of the benefits of this Divine art, unless it be accompanied by a truly devotional frame. To that end the reader will find a few plain prayers in this place which are recommended to his use, *not* as the only available or suitable ones, but as incitements to further outpourings of the soul. The *great* idea recommended by all writers on Meditation is, that one should strive to be absorbed with the thought of being in the *presence* of God. Until that step—easy though it seem, and difficult though it be to attain—is achieved, our contemplations will fall

far short of their aim, and, perhaps, induce a counter feeling of weariness.

With regard to the four prayers following, it is sufficient to state that the second should be used but occasionally, *never* indeed, except a *real* and *unmistakable* dryness of spirit is manifested. In this way it will also act as a sort of register of the state of the soul, by showing, in the number of times it has to be used at different periods of life, the various conditions of the inner life during those epochs. The third prayer should not be used except in cases where there is a *lack* of idea, of fixedness and feeling, or else it might break into the vein of thought, and hinder an otherwise more profitable contemplation. The fourth prayer is, of course, intended, like the first, for use at every meditation, together with the Lord's Prayer, which should *never* be omitted.



PRAYERS AT MEDITATION.

For a moment try to realise the very immediate Presence of God—HE IS HERE ! Then with becoming earnestness say as follows :—

1. ¶ *A Prayer to be used before the Meditation.*

O God, Who art here, make me to taste and see of Thy graciousness. Reveal Thyself unto me, so unworthy of that Blessed Vision. Take

me aside from the world, and fix my whole attention and imagination upon Thyself. Open mine eyes to behold the things which hitherto my coldness of heart, and blindness of soul have hidden. Make me to see things I before have never seen, and to hear things, I before have never heard ; and so engage my attention, and wrap up myself and my thoughts in Thee, that when I return again to my family and to my employments, I may not lose the visions of Thyself, or become cold to Thy inspirations of love. Attach all my affections unto Thyself, and bid each and all of them beat only in accordance with Thy will. May this season of close converse with Thee, my God, make a perceptible difference in me, that the face I bear before the world, may, like the countenance of Thy servant Moses, reflect the brightness of that pure, brilliant, and resplendent Face of Thine ! Bear with all my wanderings, and cause each straying thought to lead me, by some other unknown way, to Thee. And if it be Thy good pleasure that what I now meditate on, should make holy resolutions to spring up, O suffer them to grow and increase, so that the dark road of my life may become enlightened by the Divinely inspired aspirations implanted by Thy gracious Love. And so, O God, I commit my thoughts, and my memory, and my affections into Thy Hands. Use them as Thou wilt, only make me to fulfil my part in exercising them duly to thy glory and honour, that at this time I

may rejoice in the sunshine of Thy Presence, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

2. ¶ *A Prayer to be added when the soul feels loath to meditate.*

O Lord God, Who dost sometimes deny Thy sensible presence in order that we may make the harder struggle to attain unto it ; mercifully regard the coldness of my heart at this time and expel from it the powers of the evil one, that there may be only room for Thyself. I am unable now to touch the hem of Thy garment, for I have fallen away from Thee and am depressed by my sin, therefore I beseech Thee to come and lift me up, and by Thine aid to quicken in me my lost feeling of devotion. Then shall I, with renewed vigour and re-awakened love, delight myself in Thy Word and in Thy Self. Hear my cry, O God, for Jesus Christ's sake, our dear Lord and Saviour. Amen.

3. ¶ *A Prayer during the continuance of the Meditation.*

Lord God, Whose Presence I desire to seek, abide with me throughout the time of my meditation, and whereas the thoughts and imaginations of my own mind are evil continually, mercifully impart the illumination of Thy wisdom, and the generous overflowings of Thy grace ; so that, keeping Thy glorious truths in

memory, and striving therefrom to learn more of Thee, I may not fail to receive the speedy fulfilment of Thy promises, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. ¶ *A Prayer before rising from the knees.*

Now, O God, I thank Thee for permitting me to meditate upon Thy Word. I acknowledge before Thee my utter unworthiness even to listen to that Word, and I long to assure Thee, O my God, of my deep sense of pure gratitude for the high privilege which Thou hast at this time vouchsafed me, that I might think of things divine, and contemplate with hopefulness the vision of Thyself. Whatever good Thou hast inspired during my meditation be pleased to engraft deeply in my heart, and whatever has been erring and amiss, do Thou pitifully forgive. Thou hast promised that Thy Word shall never return empty unto Thee, grant then, I beseech Thee, that I may bring forth good fruit out of the seed Thou hast now sown. It is good for me to be alone with Thee, and to hold sweet converse, and Thou hast been very near unto me at this time. I thank Thee for this Thy condescension, and implore Thee that I may show my gratitude by the exhibition of a more perfect life, a more holy and blameless conversation, a more gentle disposition of mind, a more earnest interest in my religious course, with a deeper sense of my own imperfections and entire dependence on Thee.

Seal Thou my renewed resolutions, and perfect
Thou all my many imperfections. Increase in
me a love for my meditations, that by their due
exercise I may fit myself for my eternal union
and intercourse with Thee in Heaven, through
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, &c.



Meditation II.

GOD'S WAYS TO HIS KINGDOM.

"Through the Gates into the City."—Rev. xxii. 14.

Par. 1.] Hast thou not heard, and hath it not been told thee of old, that thou hast but a short and weary stay on earth, and that thy abode hereafter is to be in a City golden and beautiful, whose ornaments shall be the living stones of men, redeemed and saved, amongst whom even thou mayest have a place? But, O soul, hast not thou often rejected by thy thoughtlessness and miserable excuses all that love which thy God implanted in thee towards that blessed home, and towards Himself, the Maker and Builder of that City? Picture to thyself the frequent opportunities thou hast had and the equally frequent objections thou hast made, when conscience or some other voice urged thee to consider the danger thou wert in of losing thy chance of happiness and thy share of bliss? . . . Thou hast vainly imagined that *one* sudden effort at the last, when thy strength and health were failing, would procure thee an entrance into the City of the blest; and forgetful hast thou been, O my soul, of what thy Lord

had said to thee when He spake of the *Gates* by which thou shouldest enter in. Learn then now, in repentance and contrition, that round that glorious City is a wall, and in that wall are *Gates*, formed and builded by the Heavenly Architect, that thou, oh wandering one, mightest find an entrance there! Be constrained by this thought to the deepest effort of thy gratitude. . . . Yet learn again in the mystical interpretation of these Gates, that to thee they may appear to be dark and gloomy, while to those within the City, who in patience have toiled until they reached them, these selfsame Gates may seem both bright and luminous. And then remember, my soul, how that the difference is not in the Gates but in thy own sad state.

Par. 2.] If thou wouldest find out the *names* of the Gates to the Heavenly City, thou needest not go far to do so. HE who liveth perpetually within those sacred walls is at hand to show thee, and with His gentle voice to tell thee which one He meaneth thee to go through. As thou standest gazing in thy helplessness, and wondering how dark and miserable they seem, it may be He will encourage thee when He openeth one in thy presence to let another of thy fellows in, that thou mayest catch a lasting vision of the glory which is unrevealed as yet to men. No longer then will thy panting, weary, heart-broken feelings be depressed at the greatness of thy task; for thou shalt immediately for-

get the darkness of the Gates in the sight of the City into which they lead. Stand then still, O, soul of mine, while Jesus tells thee what these Gates may be. . . . Wilt thou tremble with thy unguarded fear when He lifteth his Hand and biddeth thee learn from that sacred wound-print there, of the *Gate of Pain*? Or when He pointeth to His once torn and troubled Brow, and telleth thee that another Gate is called the *Gate of Mockery and Shame*? Or when He biddeth thee gaze at the beatified and gloriously bright spear-mark resplendent in His generous Side, and teaches thee of the *Gate of unrequited Love*? . . . Either wilt thou be astonished when He turneth to thy home on earth, and reminding thee of His own poor life, biddeth thee to seek the *Gate of Self-denial*? Or when He maketh thee to read of how He was misunderstood, and cruelly laughed to scorn, that He would have thee follow Him as He entereth through the *Gate of Forbearance*? And doth not a whisper come to thee across the angry waters, as they roar and swell, when in the midst of danger the disciples saw Him—their Lord and thine—leading, in His care for them, the way for thee to follow Him through the *Gate of Charity and Love*?

Par. 3.] Contemplate then, O my soul, what it is which thy Lord reveals to thee when He shows thee the *Gate of Pain*. So easy has it been for thee to watch the pains of others, and

though thy heart sometimes grew sick with the weariness of thy guardianship, or with the unseemly sights that were revealed to thee by thy suffering brother or sister, yet so easy has it still been for thee to overcome thy feelings and continue thy ministrations notwithstanding. But when the Gate, at which thou didst watch thy fellow traveller toiling to enter, was in turn opened for thyself, and the Heavenly Guide beckoned thee with that same wounded Hand of His, thy heart did sink within thee, and thou didst pray that it might be anything *but this*. Hast thou not shrunk back in fear and dismay, when thou wert told in accents of unmistakable firmness and love, that thy portion was a life of pain and suffering, and by that means alone thou wast to attain thy rest? . . . Or if it were not even spoken to thee in so severe a manner, but instead thereof thou wert bidden to endure a life of pain in the trials of thy *mind* and thy *affections*? if one by one the friends thou didst love so dearly were to be taken from thee, and thy garments were those of constant mourning? if all thy efforts to maintain thyself and thy family seemed fruitless, and poverty cast its dark mantle over thee? *then* what were thy feelings and thy dispositions to thy God? Didst thou in all these things remember that it was the sure token given thee that the Gate of Pain had been apportioned unto thee, as the *best* (in thy case it may be the *only*) Gate by which thou couldst enter in? . . .

Cultivate then, O my soul, the disposition to observe in all these ways the Hand—all wounded by the pain It once endured—the Hand of Jesus. He saw that if thou hadst gone by the other Gates thou wouldest perhaps have been misled and lost, and so, in the overflowing love wherewith He loveth thee, He calleth thee now to follow Him, full of the beaming hope of the beautiful city, through this darkened Gate of Pain.

Par. 4.] Question. with thyself, my soul, whether in the Gates of *Mockery and Shame*, and of *Unrequited Love*, thy dear Lord doth not also bid thee follow Him. Thou knowest so well, by the sweet story of His life, how bravely and how readily He entered them Himself; and thou rememberest that saying of His mouth which bids thee bear thy cross and go after Him. Hath thy life then been such as entitled thee *honestly* to the mockery and scorn He bare? Hath thy deeds been such that, careless of ostentation, thou hast simply done thy duty, and in the face of trial and oppression feared not the scorn and the mockery of men? O soul of mine, hast thou not often either refused to enter in by this Gate because of thy faint-heartedness; or entered it because thy pride was pleased and gratified when thy endurance for thy Lord was noised abroad, albeit in the voice of mockery? It is possible for thee to err in either way, and wilt thou be bold enough

to say that thou hast failed in neither? . . . Did it seem very hard to thee, when after that, thou hadst toiled to give pleasure unto those whom thou didst love, or when against thy feelings thou didst benefit those who were thine enemies, that they turned against thee and used thee ill? Was it hard for thee to give up everything and appear to receive nothing in return? Didst thou lament because in all the world thou couldest not find *one* heart that kept and gave thee back with usury, the gift of thy poor love? O then, my soul, didst thou try to remember that this burden of thine, this "unrequited love" was to be to thee the Gate by which in lowly patience thou shouldest best follow Him Who went before thee? . . . But forget not in thy sadness that there is a dear and loving Breast on which thou mayest lean for comfort; that there is a sacred Heart which is alive with the most tender and pitiful compassion for thee, and wherein thou wilt alone find help if thy entrance to the Heavenly City be by the Gates of Mockery and Shame or of Unrequited Love.

Par. 5.] It may be that when thy Lord saw the constant stubbornness of thine heart in thy earlier days, or when He sees thy love of self, and carelessness of others now, He appointed, or does appoint, unto thee, with sorrow to Himself, that if thou wouldest enter into the City, it should be through the Gate of *Self-denial* and *Forbearance*. He knew *so* well the

exact manner in which thy taint of sin should be removed, that He has bidden thee to be on the continual watch for the exercise of these thy peculiar duties. O my soul, in what manner art thou prepared to fulfil them? If thou wouldest learn submission to His will, and wouldest make others' wants thine own, thou needest *first* to break off in thyself something that will cost thee pain. Count thy duty not begun, until it hath induced smarting for thy lost and rejected joy. Then *what* shall that joy be? . . . Be humbled into very nothingness again, at the recollection of how thou hast always been pleased to give thyself thy liberty, yet so disturbed when thou didst see the ill fruit of that liberty in others! Always been so lenient to thy own failings—so hard upon the failings of thy friend! Always so captivated with thy own works—so ill satisfied with the labours of thy fellow! Ah, my soul, where hast thou put thy forbearance? So soon angry; so soon ready to attribute bad motives; so soon ready in finding fault! Well mayest thou cry out that the darkness of thy sin hath obscured the Vision of the blessed Gate of Forbearance. . . . Then shalt not thou find comfort in the answer to thy call? Will no forgiving voice be near thee to appease thy fear, and bid thee hope? Shall no example of thy duty be placed before thee? O shall there not arise before thee, as thou prayest *now*, the beauteous Form of Him, Who came not to do His *own*, but His

Father's will ; Who so long forbore the angry word, that He might win thee by His love ? Yea, thy Lord will add His Blessing as thou passest through these wondrous Gates.

Par. 6.] It may be that thy Lord implanted in thee so strong a spirit of Divine love when He formed thy soul, that to give it due exercise and play, He called thee to come to Him by the more active use of this virtue than of others. He hath seen thy capacity from childhood ; He hath noticed thy desire to obtain some object whereon to expend thy precious gift of love ; He hath discovered that it is hard for thee to centre it on Him alone in the devotion of thy life, and so He hath commissioned thee to spare not of thy charity upon His poor, His wounded, His afflicted, His hungering, His imprisoned members that are thy fellows in this vale of woe. O soul of mine, hast thou fulfilled this thy holy mission ? Art thou entering within these beauteous, heavenly Gates ? . . . Is thy brother tried with difficulty and want ? Hast thou striven after thy means to minister to his necessity ? Is another in distress of mind because of dangers that attack an undefended, and unconquered body or soul, threatening a final overthrow of every good resolve and purpose,—then hast thou striven to walk over those troubled waters, and through that raging storm, that thou mightest speak a word of kindness or fulfil a work of compassion, in the

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comforting and soothing of such? Point out to thyself wherein thou hast been willing to follow thy Lord through difficulty, that thou mightest find a cause for the exercise of thy love, thy charity : is there not *one* occasion that will rise into thy mind? Not *one* token whereby thou mightest find hope as to the sureness of thy entrance through these Gates? Resolve then, O my soul, at this time, that thy *very next* action, or word, shall bring thee on thy way to them. Thou knowest neither the day nor the hour in the which thy Lord may come to call for evidence of thy progress,—then seek if thou hast already been blessed with a loving heart, to increase its power ; or, if not naturally possessed of such, to fashion one unto thyself, after thy Divine pattern.

Par. 7.] And now thou hast visited these Gates whereby thy Lord would have thee to enter in. The superscription over each has been, “through much tribulation must thou enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” Hath thy heart failed thee? Hath the task seemed too hard for thee—almost more than it was possible for thee to bear? Then think of that Kingdom, that City of light and joy, into which these Gates do lead, and into which thy Lord hath passed Himself already, and where He continueth to make sweet intercession for thy needs and woes. Imagine some of the overflowing brilliancies of those dazzling courts ! those

streets of shining gold ! those towers and walls of living stones ! that sea of crystal without a ripple on its calm untroubled surface ! . . . And think of *thy* place there : thy feet washed from the dust and bruises of the dark and stony way ; thy garments changed into white and glistening robes without one shadow of a stain or spot ; thy head encircled with the conqueror's crown ; thy hand possessed of the victor's palm ; and thy face radiant with the reflected glory of thy Lord's most wondrous smile ? Thy companions in life surrounding thee now in rapture undefined—*unable* any longer to comprehend past woes, with recreated powers which know nothing but the pleasure of their God ! The angels with their ceaseless song and harmony, and the four and twenty elders round about the throne, wrapt in mystic adoration so devout and meet ! O soul, were the Gates *too* narrow, *too* hard, *too* dark for thee, when THIS was at the end ? . . . But once again. Picture to thyself the thrill of unmitigated love, and interminable joy when thou shalt see the King Himself, in all His beauty ! The Face thou hast so often *imagined* whilst on earth, and which thou hast longed to know, and yearned to see—the Face of Jesus, of Him who hath brought thee safely through thy toil, encouraged thee by example and by counsel, and gently led thee when thou couldst not walk alone, until He made thee to enter through His own appointed Gates, into the City of which He is Himself the Light so fair and perfect !

Meditation II.

"THE FUTURE OF THE WICKED."

"The Wicked shall be turned into hell; and all the people that forget God."—Psalm ix. 17.

Par. 8.] Thou hast a dark and gloomy task set before thee, O my soul, in the present contemplation of the consequences of unrepented sin, and the miserable termination of a Godless life! And it may be that thou wilt yield to the solicitations of Satan—who ever desireth to draw thee away from the picture of hell, lest thou in thy terror thereat shouldest escape it, and who even now would persuade thee to turn to a more hopeful subject. Yet *stay!* Hold firmly to the Hand of thy dear Lord, and *venture* for a while to the consideration of this most fearful and appalling topic. So shalt thou have less cause for apprehension that in some unguarded moment thou mightest approach too rashly. Yet withal thou needest more abundant prayer for courage to behold, and for humility to consider. . . . And whilst thou approachest unto the borders of that pit, thou wilt find thyself visited by him who dwelleth there.

that by thy anxiety to escape this title thou mayest fall into the snare of the devil again, and become wicked in the pride of thine heart? Rather be humbled by this consideration, and remember that while by nature thou art prone to wickedness, by grace thou mayest be freely pardoned.

Par. 10.] Stay for another moment in thy weeping meditation on thy fallen fellow-creatures, and whilst thou standest still, be humbled by the thought of thy own deserts, lest thou fall too. See among the crowd of doomed ones, who lived in forgetfulness of God, images and pictures of thyself, and be reproved. Gaze upon him who overstepped the highway of God by hoarding up his goods and money until they grew into curses to himself and his soul! See how that other one remembered his earthly master more than God, and served him to his own destruction, through every evil way; and how that fellow-labourer of his on earth lies moaning in the present irresistible acknowledgment of that God whose existence and power he had ever denied! Canst thou not see again so many, too, who by their constant neglect of prayer, withered up their souls, and were only fit for the fire at the last? And amidst all them, my soul, seest thou not some shadows cast before thee of that coming doom which thou hast only just time to evade? . . . But it may be there are grosser sins than these that thou

knowest of, which as thou rememberest the judgment, seem more evil to thee than they did before. Time was, when thou didst think nothing of a curse, or lie, or foul word—there are some in the number of the WICKED who are in hell for just these very things! And there are weary, ghastly bodies there to-day, because in life they loved the following out of drunkenness, of anger, or of lust; and shouldst *thou* not then be with them too, for dost not thou deserve the doom as much as they? . . . Then there are some there for more refined and spiritual sins; O my soul, how wilt thou escape the punishment for these? So often hath the white cover been laid for thee upon the Altar of thy Church; and the Feast of thy Saviour's Love been spread, but the whiteness of thy heart was not meet, nor thy hunger sufficient to bring thee to thy Communion! And at other of thy services thou hast been so indevout and wandering, and anxious for the end—that thou canst hardly *hope* to be where the Worship of an Endless Communion goeth on. Is it not more meet that thou shouldst be in the place where God shall nevermore be loved?

Par. 11.] Now thy Lord will bid thee think (with sorrow in thy heart for those to whom the world was dearer than Himself); He will bid thee think of the *place* itself in which the lost souls dwell. It is hell! If thou hast attained unto any conception of the glories of heaven,

then by severest contrast thou mayest imagine hell. Thy Lord will tell thee in the accents of His tenderest love, of the worm that dieth not, and the fire that shall not be quenched. HE will tell thee of the unutterable pain of *seeing* the joy of the ransomed, and of being unable to attain unto it; of the fearful sense of piercing remorse because that *then* thou canst not mend the past, or warn those whom thou hast left behind thee; of the burning thirst when (after that thou hast so often refused the Water of Life) thou canst not then get one drop to cool thy parched tongue! All this HE will tell thee *now* that thou mayest be forewarned in time.

. . . So too He will make thee to know the bitterness that will come from the memories of sins indulged, in spite of His grace and help. In the perpetual fulfilment of that dark sin HE will make each lost soul to refresh its memory. He will convince thee that hell is no delusion, or imagination of the mind,—but a place of torment which is past description in mere earthly languages of woe. He will tell thee, that the source of all this pain and misery is the ABSENCE OF GOD! O soul of mine, wilt thou not then strive to attain unto greater closeness with Him? . . . And dost thou ask how long this punishment continues? Unto the judgment? Yea, and *after* that! Still in hell, the soul *once* there—there for ever! No reprieve, no *temporary* absence, but in hell, without the dawning star of hope to make thee long for

a morrow. There shall be *no* hope there ; the powers of mind, the acts and exercises of devotion and love, *all* gone, *all* stopped ! Only one unutterable, death-like feeling pressing its heavy hand upon the fevered brow, and whispering its ceaseless mockery in the ear—*this* is thy rest. Hast thou no longing to escape in time ?

Par. 12.] Before thou leavest the contemplation of hell thou hast one more vision of horror to conjure up before thy mind, adding thereto thy prayers that thy Lord would in mercy deliver thee from any participation in it hereafter. Thou hast seen who were the people dwelling there : now consider what the *objects* are on which those lost ones gaze. Spirits of evil, more dreadful in their forms and gestures than any earthly painting could represent them to thee ; demons who have had their powers in this world, and who now live to taunt their victims with their folly ; Satan himself, glaring in his fiery anger and wicked joy, upon the prey he has obtained ! Thou wilt wonder, when thou seest him in all his hideousness, at the light manner in which the world could use his name to help its feeble intercourse and jokes. These are *some* of the visions of hell from which thou needest now to pray for deliverance. . . . And let not the anxious world deceive thee that the *fires* of hell are but figures of speech ! It helps thee not to fear it half as much, if thou canst but rid thee of this thought. Strive rather

to imagine all the agony and misery which the roaring, crackling flames must add. The fires gaining upon each soul, and using it as fuel that shall never be consumed. Then listen to those unutterable cries, those yells, those howls, those shrieks, those groans, those deep-drawn sighs, those laments that are all too late! Shalt *thou* escape? . . . Think too, O my soul, of the gnashing of teeth because of purposes that are continually failing, as life itself had failed before! The settling down of despair, the gnawings of eternal tortures, amid the peals of the fiendish laughter of those who led souls into the sins that brought them there! And be humbled into deepest and most unmistakable gratitude when thou rememberest that, dreadful as these terrors are, there is a pathway opened whereby thou mayest, notwithstanding thy unworthiness, escape them all!

Par. 13. Think again, my soul, about the word which God the Holy Ghost hath used in His description of the act of judgment mentioned here. HE hath said that "the Wicked shall be *turned* into hell." It shall be an act contrary to the loving nature of thy Lord, because the time for the exhibition of His mercy shall have gone. Carried away from the presence of God, without the chance of an appeal, with no hope of a return, thrust aside from His throne and His worship, because the soul had blinded itself to its only chance of escape, and had madly turned

itself away when it should have approached. So now in its own payment is it to be paid,—it shall be *turned* away by the Judge. Canst thou allow this thought to be unfruitful? Wilt thou not fear in *time*, lest thou too have a share in the avenging sentence of thy Lord. . . . And what will the portion be of those who are thus turned away in anger from the inheritance and home for which they imagined a death-bed repentance would prepare and fit them? Satan ready waiting to seize them as they are borne away from God, shall carry them to his own abode that their woe may there and then begin. O my soul, imagine thyself suddenly condemned by an earthly sentence, and carried all-resisting to the dungeon's cell: what feelings of most excruciating grief would fill thee at the prospect of a life-long imprisonment! And yet there is the same fear to thee if thou art delighting in the pleasures of sin and Satan, that thy ruin may be as full and as complete as that at the judgment. Escape then for thy *life*! . . . But seemeth it not to thee a hard saying, that the pleasures of this life, its sins and snares, must be forsaken and rejected by thee, who by thy very creation art placed within this life? Then strive to learn what thy Lord would whisper gently in thine ear: "Thy enjoyment of life shall not be stayed one moment, for whilst thou givest up the things I bid thee for My sake, I will give thee in their place, such tokens of My love that, in comparison of them,

the things of thy former choice shall be no longer powerful to attract thee."

Par. 14.] Before the visions that thou hast had shall flee away, and thou return once more to the other meditations of thy life, thou needest to be assured again that thou hast no right in thyself to hope for anything, except hell ; but that in Jesus Christ thou mayest have a sure and certain trust that thou *wilt* escape it. These two holy truths must lead thee, O my soul, to acknowledge thy own unspeakable nothingness, and consequent helplessness ; and to increase thy faith and love in Him who is all powerful to save to the uttermost. Hast thou sinned in every way, and hast thou seen in hell thine own image in the doom of other souls that have gone as thou art going now ? Then know that thou needest to fear and tremble for thy safety, and by the forsaking of thy sin to leave a place within thy heart for the Presence of thy Lord to fill. Or hast thou had a vain assurance of peace, while sin was still reigning in thy mortal body, and hath thy life been hollow and unreal ? Then at the cost of thy pride and humiliation acknowledge thyself no longer to have a single hope that finds not its centre and its joy in Him who is thy Saviour and thy God. . . . And if the world has made thee to *forget* God, and to exert thyself alone with the things that perish, resolve within thyself, that by increased watchfulness and vigour, thou wilt henceforth make

the circumstances of earth subservient to thy highest interests above. Be inclined to form rules as to thy conduct, thy occupations and thy time, and to live in the devoutest and most prayerful remembrance of the Lord thy God, before whom thou shalt appear at the Day of Doom. . . . If thou wouldest escape hell, and have others to escape with thee, learn by continual remembrance of its horrors, to loathe it more and more, and to train thyself in every way in opposition to its laws and precepts. Thus shalt thou be preparing thyself day by day to appear spotless and faultless before thy God, and to merit, through the power of thy Lord's Atonement and Righteousness, a portion with the holy and the blest.



Meditation III.

"GOD'S CALL ; ITS POWER, AND OUR PRO- CRASTINATION.

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time ; when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee."—Acts xxiv. 25.

Par. 15.] There stood before the impious judge, the Apostle of God, whose office helped him to the earnest declaration of the truth with which he was commissioned by his Master ! Ponder, O my soul, upon the exceeding boldness wherewith the servants of Jesus are enabled to declare their Divine messages, irrespective of the high offices of those before whom they stand. Thy Lord hath told thee that His kingdom is not from beneath, but from above ; and it is well that thou shouldest also consider how mighty is the influence of heavenly truth upon that of earth. Behold a prisoner before his judge, smiting with the weapons of Divine power, and making the proud cold heart of his accuser tremble at his gentle yet all-searching blows. And the same influence shall also be *thine*, if thou too makest

thy boast in the simple but sublime law of God. . . . Remember, then, the greatness of thy calling, when thou mayest, with the utterances of thy lips inspire other souls to purposes of amendment, and to conviction of their sins. A mystic inspiration in thy very voice, thy choice of words, thy opportunity of speaking them, shall be powerful in the Hands of thy God, to turn, or influence, thy brother's path! And wilt thou not tremble, therefore, when thou rememberest how terrible the consequences may become unto thyself, if thou dost not listen with loving attention to the messages of Jesus, from the lips of those whose office it is to teach and to instruct thee? . . . Take into thy consideration now, that when the Word of God is sounded, there are many kinds who listen. Felix (himself an irreligious man) *sent* for S. Paul that he might hear him. And thus, my soul, there are such as he, even now—(strive thyself not to be one among them)—who, living still in the delight of sin, vainly seek to hear the truth from the lips of others. Hast thou not, too, sometimes sought for the gratification of thy hearing alone, when thou, like Felix, hast put thyself in the way of listening to men of renown, and hast forgotten the name and honour of Him, whose messengers they were?

Par. 16.] Enquire diligently until thou dost find out beyond power of mistake, in what spirit it is that thou most generally dost listen to the

preaching of the Word of God. Art thou not like Felix, seeking to know something concerning the Faith in Christ, *not* with a view of putting in *practice* the suggestions that may be made, and of thus preparing the way in thy soul for an entrance of the Truth—but rather in a spirit of *curiosity*? Thou hast been told that at a given place and time, a certain sermon shall be preached, and it may be that (irrespective of thy creed, or of thy soul's stability), thou hast gone greedily to satisfy thy inquisitiveness. And because thou hast, in some few cases, found thereby a blessing to thy soul, thou hast imagined it to be good for thee to become a wanderer in thy religion, choosing for thyself guides and teachers who were after thy own mind, and gratifying thy itching ears, to the neglect of thy own Divinely appointed instructor, through whom thy God saw fit to enlighten thee the most. O soul of mine, beware how thou goest astray from the spot where thy God hath appointed to meet thee. . . . But thou mayest at some time have gone in the spirit of *mockery*, to listen to what was said. There was amusement for thee in the manner of delivery, or the gestures, or the voice, or the importance which he who spake attached to any particular truth, which appeared so trivial to thee, and so thou hast run that thou mightest find satisfaction for thy merriment, and have something left to bring back with thee to thy family for their amusement and sport. Like Felix, thou wast

delighted, it may be, at the sight of an earnestness like S. Paul's, not because it *touched* thee, but because it excited thy scornful jesting at the attitude, of fervour in a cause wherein thou hadst no interest. . . . Weary, indeed, mayest thou have become of the times of worshipping, when such fitful and vain fancies filled thee with their evil presence. Be moved, then, to consider the greatness of the Truth thou hast heard so often, and treated so lightly, and apply the lessons they have taught thee to thyself.

Par. 17.] Bring before thy mind the subjects of the many sermons and instructions thou hast listened to of old. Remember the words that were spoken to thee by the Bishop when he laid his hands upon thee, and sealed thee for God's own. And the many warnings that were uttered in thy hearing even while thou wert in preparation for that solemn service. Think of the many, many, expositions of the Bible that thou hast been a listener to, while thy thoughts were entangled with the world, and thou couldst not bring thy mind to release them even for a time! In all these opportunities, which speak to thee by their memories from afar, thou hast heard of that "Righteousness" which was powerful to make Felix tremble while he thought thereof. Hath no word yet reached thee of thy own depravity, original in thy birth, and reproduced by thy sin ever since? Nor of the justice of thy God in requiring a recompense for

that which thou didst thereby lose? Hast thou not a knowledge then of that, so generous and merciful substitute, which thy Jesus hath procured for thee, by covering thee with His *own* most perfect and entire righteousness? . . . Or hath the past opportunities of listening to the Word of God, not taught thee of the wondrous carrying out of this gift to thee. O soul of mine, thou hast too long contented thyself with the shadow of a faith which was pleased with listening to the truth when preached or spoken, without feeling that thou hadst a part in it all, and that each sounding of the message was as much for thee alone as for all the world in which thou dwelledst. . . . And hath there never been a whisper of security arising to thee out of this most holy doctrine of Christ's righteousness, which, when thou didst consider thy past waywardness, made thee tremble with gratitude, in the contemplation of thy perfect safety after that thou wast clothed with this beauteous and spotless garb, in the which thy Saviour would enwrap thee to prepare thee for His wedding feast?

Par. 18.] And while thou hast been captivated by the exceeding sweetness of this doctrine of Christ's Righteousness, thou hast also been preparing thy soul for the contemplation of that other truth which, like Felix, thou hast listened to in the preaching of God's Word. For the security of those who are thus clothed in the

garment provided for them by their Saviour, will naturally develop in thee an idea of that Temperance of which S. Paul was inspired to reason. Thou wilt learn herein something concerning the ordering of thy time, and duties, so that they shall accord with the spirit of gratitude which the gift of Christ hath aroused in thee. Thou wilt continually endeavour to remember that in all thy earthly engagements thou hast to consider the relationship which they will bear to thy God. O soul, well mayest thou tremble, like Felix trembled, when thou beginnest to test thy life by this most searching proof. Hast thou not made thy temporal concerns the generally to be considered topics of thy life? Hast thou observed due temperance in the exercise of thy duties? Hath there been no revelling and such like? no upsetting of the quiet gift of moderation? . . . In thy personal duties hast thou not been content with their hasty and legal performance, with a hurried fulfilment of things which were unpleasant to thee? Hast thou not still to learn that *true* temperance will make thee careful, diligent, meek, and active in thy every relationship of life, and fit thee for the true *stability* of heaven, where there shall be no undue stimulants to real devotion, but a temperate harmony of praise and duty. . . . And with regard to thy mutual dealings with thy fellow souls: art thou certain that thou hast nought to tremble at when thou rememberest the very many occasions of peevishness,

of anger, of displeasure and unpleasant words, of variable dispositions, which prevented the spirit of temperance to exist in thy household, and disturbed the peacefulness of home? O my soul, examine thyself as to thy exercise of temperance, lest thou have a fear that heaven will be too monotonous and quiet for thee to dwell in with enjoyment !

Par. 19.] While St. Paul would urge upon Felix the necessity of contemplating the only manner of obtaining an entrance into heaven, by a trust in a power greater than his own, and would further urge upon him the necessary exercise of a spirit of moderation as to the world, he was not content until he had reminded him of a conclusion being put to all time of grace and mercy, by the judgment to come. And, my soul, thou needest again to place thyself in the position of this ruler, and remember that thou hast but a little time, after all, wherein thou mayest make thy salvation sure. Thou hast but another year or so to live, and then there will come to thee the testing time, as to all the past. Thy task will be done, and, whether it be good or bad, thou wilt have to show it to thy Master. He may now allow thee, for a time, to spend thy life in wantonness, without chastising thee, but He will prove His power over thee *then*. O think not because thou art not now afflicted for thy sin, that therefore God hath not observed it, or counted up thy trans-

gression ! . . . The judgment is *certain* to come. Then what wilt thou do? Thou shalt stand shivering on the brink of destruction, knowing that there can be no pardon for thy unrepented sins, and yet unable to escape their consequences. And though thou mayest for a brief time comfort thy bereaved self with the thought that thou wilt escape in the crowd, or that God will forget thy deeds and pass a favourable sentence upon thee after all, yet thou shalt speedily discover thy error. *The judgment is certain* in its *coming* and in its *sentence* ! Oh my soul, wilt thou not tremble for thyself ? . . . But there will indeed be hope for those who have been clothed with the Righteousness of Jesus, and whose lives have been passed in the exercise of temperance in body and soul. The judgment to them will be the sealing of their long expected joy. Wilt thou not choose betimes, and have thy portion with the blest ? Then, my soul, let the influence of God be upon thee, and listen to His Holy Word of Truth.

Par. 20.] And if in all these messages that have been delivered unto thee, thou hast neglected, in times past, to hear the voice of Him who condescended to converse with thee, make up for the days of carelessness, by no longer withstanding that Voice. Canst thou be harder in thy sinfulness than the wicked, Godless, Felix? And yet *his* heart was made to tremble ! Is there no uneasiness about thine? He sent for

the messenger, but did not expect to get an address that should send conviction of sin to himself. O my soul, thou hast often gone into the way of God, to listen to His earthly ministers, like Felix did, and thou hast perhaps (like him again), been most suddenly convinced, when thou didst least expect it. But hast thou *trembled* at the thoughts which have been suggested to thee? Hast thou felt that thou couldest not escape, and that if even for a *time* thou wert permitted to live in sin, that still thou shouldest in the end find thyself no longer a free agent in the consequences thereof, but that in the misery of undying woe thou shouldest have to acknowledge God to be thy Lord? . . . Realize what this *trembling* meaneth. Thou needest a conviction of conscience; an unanswerable apprehension of thy sinfulness; an earnest anxiety to amend. The picture of the termination of thy iniquities must exceed in prominence, the picture of their temporary gratification, and thou must overcome thy feeble opposition to the Supreme Will of God, and let thy trembling helplessness find shelter and protection in the Heart of Him who willeth not the death of the greatest or vilest sinner. . . . And dost thou think it strange, and unlikely, that the words of man—albeit the words of the appointed messenger of God—*should* work conviction in the hearts of thy fellow-man, or even in *thy* heart? Ah! how truly dost thou need to learn that in this wise disposition of

matters, God hath so provided that the foolish things of this life are to be mediums of His refreshing grace, and that by the Ministry of the Word of God, the sharp and powerful two-edged sword of His Truth should divide thee from thy life of sin.

Par. 21.] But remember the additional danger in which thou standest, because of the power which (like Felix again) thou mayest exert *against* thyself. It is possible that in the face of the most powerful and soul-stirring influences, thy own soul may be held back by the influence which thy old life, and thy former connections and customs exert over thee! It may be that thou wilt be shaken, and made to *tremble*, at the wondrous truths of the Bible, and that, notwithstanding their declarations to thee, thou mayest turn away back to the world which claims thee as its own. Felix trembled, and yet he put off until a "more convenient season," the hour of his repentance. And, so far as thou art able to judge, he NEVER REPENTED! Think, then, that unless thou resolve upon an *immediate* movement, thou mayest *even still* be lost! The excitement of the moment will pass away, and thou wilt need to have the influence of a fixed and determined resolution, or else thou wilt return once more to the sins from which the Message of God hath made thee for a time to relax thy hold. . . . Picture to thyself the many occasions on which thou didst promise to

thyself to embrace a "more convenient season." Thou thoughtest when thy trials weighed less heavily upon thee ; when there was not so much demanded of thee in the fulfilment of God's service ; when thou wert in better health ; when the world prospered thee with more of its wealth and goods ; or when thou couldst induce thy friends to join thee ; that *then* thou wouldest hear more about these things ! Ah ! soul, how deluded thou hast been in thy procrastinations ! . . . Question with thyself whether thou hast not often thought that thou wouldest delay to come until it *suit*ed thee ! And be in terror lest that delay should bring thee to the condition of Felix, of whom it is *never* said that he repented ! So shalt thou be full of contrition, and speak the Truth of God in all sincerity ; turning unto Him with all thy heart.



Meditation IV.

“TRUE LIFE AND TRUE DEATH.”

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”—Phil. i. 21.

Par. 22.] O my soul, how rare is the feeling of S. Paul, who, while he found his earthly life swallowed up in Christ, yet longed after that change which, by bringing him into more immediate contact and communion with his Lord, would make him to gain even greater things than he possessed in his mortal life. Thou hast but seldom experienced any desire that thy earthly life might be more Christ-like; and still less hast thou felt that “to depart” would be a gain unto thee! Has it not been because thy longings and aspirations were more of the *world* than of Christ? because thou knewest that a termination to thy *present* life would involve an endless ruin? Yea, thou hast found thy delights apart from thy Lord, and thou hast not even *striven* to fashion thy existence after the pattern which was given thee by Him! Then if thou hast now one thought of repentance—however minute—be glad to meditate upon the mind of

S. Paul, who when a *prisoner* of God, fettered by the chains of an earthly bondage, could yet declare a life of captivity to be no less to him than CHRIST! . . . Consider how *urgent* the necessity for thee to increase in thyself a similar feeling, lest thou shouldest find no time for thy repentance when the hour of thy departure draweth near. And know, O soul, that the only way for thee to learn about these things is by a contemplation of the *sacred origin of Life*, and of the *divine beauty of Death*. These will seem strange sentences to thee—but they are true. And, moreover, if thou wouldest instruct thyself *practically*, thou needest to be found continually upon thy knees. . . . Realize that both life and death are in the Hand of God alone. It is He only Who can create or destroy. On Him alone must thou depend; apart from Him thou canst have nothing. Then if thou wouldest be enlightened *how* to live and die, thou shalt only require to pay heed to what thy God shall whisper in thine ear.

Par. 23.] Consider with *whom* the subject of thy meditation has to deal: it is *thyself*; none other than thine own poor, ignorant, and wayward self! See here the *personal* nature of that religion concerning which thou art seeking to know more. It doth not sound beyond thy power of distinguishing its message, but it cometh quite close to thee, and layeth hold of thee, and claimeth thy attention. *Thy* life is

to be so absorbed in Christ's, that apart from Him, thou art to have no desires, no feelings, no longings ! To *thee* life is to become no less than Christ ! To *thee* death is to be no longer a pang or trial, but it is to be the beginning of thy *reward* for a life on earth which was hidden in thy Lord's ; it is to be *more* precious even than the measured revelations of Christ were to thee in this world, for it is to be nothing less than GAIN ! O wondrous goodness of thy Lord ! He hath made for thee a royal road by which to journey to Himself, for He hath given thee hopes of which the world is in darkness, and He hath gilded the gloom of the grave with the glory of thy promised gain. . . . And yet that thou shouldest not make thy *personal* interests the greatest, He hath wonderfully ordained that the more thou dost apply His blessings to thyself the more shalt thou become enraptured of Him. It is thine to enjoy the unending happiness of a religious life, but thy individual enjoyment can only come by living *in Him*. And thy gain in the end, while it is most freely thine own, proceedeth entirely from thy former union with Him in the life that then shall have fled. . . . Consider too that thy connection with Him is perfect and entire. It is not said that thy life is *of* Him, or *by* Him—but it is *Himself*. It shall be wholly swallowed up in Him, Who *is* the Life. Thou shalt breathe the very atmosphere of life, thou shalt become a *part* of thy Lord ; and He, gazing in His adorable pity and

gentleness, shall see in thee the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. This then is what thou hast to learn and know.

Par. 24.] Then meditate upon the first of those two things with which thou art concerned, and see what the thought of LIFE can suggest to thee. Thou art the creature of God's Hand ; He made thee for Himself in His own good time, and placed thee in thy position because He saw that it was best for thee. He hath given thee thy duties in life, thy relations, thy home, and thy trials too, that they may lead thee (if thou use them rightly) unto Him. But a little while ago and thou wert not known, and yet the world got on as well without thee. Thy God made thee that He might bless thee, that He might give thee a place in His Kingdom. He gave thee that which no money or power could procure for thee—He gave thee the breath of life. Wilt thou not resolve then to give thyself back to Him ? Say unto thyself, that because there would have been so much less sin, and so many less troubles if thou hadst never been here, that thou wilt, in gratitude to God for having allowed thee to remain long enough to hear His voice, prepare thy soul diligently for Him. . . . Weigh well in the balances Jesus Christ and the *world*. Thou hast seen Who He is. Now see what the *World* is. It is truly His creation, but then it is defiled. So then it can be no resting-place for that which He hath made and intended

for a spotless life with Himself. There *are* good things in the world, but they fade and die, they have only a *time* to live. Then is not He, Who made all things by the breath of His power, the One in Whom thy affections are to centre? . . . Therefore thou wilt see the reasonable need of losing and forgetting thyself in Him. He will be thy "All in all," without Whom thy light shall be as darkness. He will be beyond thy powers of expression in His dazzling beauty; in His ineffable affection; in His most wondrous condescension; in His all-pitiful sympathy; in His unfailing truthfulness; in His adorable long sufferance; and in His most generous and unstinted gift of LIFE!

Par. 25.] GOD shall then be no longer forgotten by thee, O my soul, for thou wilt resolve within thyself, that in most thankful memory of His gift of life, thou wilt make Him to be the One for whom thou wilt work. Thou wilt make His will thine, in every little detail of thy daily existence. Thou wilt make Him thy Rock, thy House of Refuge, thy Covering; whilst *thou* wilt be but the traveller, and the pilgrim, seeking rest and shelter in the hard and heavy journey of life. Thou wilt make Him the Shepherd as He hath so often bid thee do, whilst thou thyself wilt be the sheep which He carrieth gently to His sacred fold. Thou wilt forget in Him, Who is thy life, all thy own purposes, thy hopes of earthly good, the work

and aims of this life. Thou wilt die with Him in His death, and bury thyself in His tomb, that with Him thou mayest share the glories of the final resurrection to Eternal Life. O soul, thou wilt turn thy *all* into nothing, to make Him thy everything ! . . . Then thou wilt make Him Who gave thee thy life, to be whole and sole governor of thee. For hath not He a right? Thou art His property, and He will either have thee as a free-will offering now, or He will *claim* thee for his own at the judgment. Thou mayest escape, and imagine thyself in no way related to Him now, but *then* the fable thou hast believed in will be broken through and shattered ! Wilt thou not remember, if thou art faithful to Him, that for thee to live "is CHRIST," that He, the "Anointed" is thine. If thou wilt lose thyself in Him now, thou shalt awake up after His likeness ; if thou wilt transfer all thy affections to Him now, it will make thee part of Him for ever. . . . Doubt not that all these blessings are intended for thee. Truly thou art a great sinner, but so is He a great Saviour. Thou art so imperfect : remember then His perfections. So thou mayest have an earnest confidence in Him now, that He will bid thee have a share in His life hereafter.

Par. 26.] Yet thou canst not hope with *vain* assurance. Be terrified if thou dost notice in thyself any false security which may lead thee to imagine thyself beyond danger of losing the life

in Christ, of which thou art so justly proud. Thou must no longer be of the earth, in thy tastes and desires. Thou canst not, if thou hast embraced the profession of Christ—live *only* by profession. Thou must act the part of a professed, sworn soldier, wearing the uniform, and carrying the banner. Thou must look and wait for the sound of the battle, and know thy place in it. Thou must no longer be captivated with the world, but must embrace the hardships of a devoted life. Remember, O my soul, that S. Paul was a *prisoner* when he wrote this profession of his faith, and was in expectation of probable execution. When thou, too, art *enduring* for the Name of Christ, and art *fettered* for the cause of thy rejoicing, then thou mayest venture to declare thy faith in some such words, without a fear of talking vainly or presumptuously before God. . . . How canst *thou* dare to entertain hopes of Christ and of gain, who dost not value the Blessed Feast of thy Saviour's love in the Holy Communion, which He hath left thee for a remembrance and showing forth of His Death? Or canst *thou* dare, who art perhaps guilty of a deadly sin, which goeth its way unreprieved in thy heart, hope for blessing, or for life? And thou wilt only experience the power of this profession, when in singleness of heart and devotion, thou hast made up thy mind that it is *worth thy while* to give up all thou hast, so that for thee to live may be nothing short of Christ. . . . Picture then, my soul,

the amazing, yet humble, satisfaction with which thou mayest talk ; and think of thy union with thy Lord, when by thy faithful adherence unto Him, while His grace sustaineth thee, thou mayest be so absorbed into His likeness, into His life, and into *Himself*, that thy own existence may be wholly swallowed up in Him.

Par. 27.] And now thou hast to consider how it is *possible* for anything to be a greater gain than that which thou inheritest in Christ, when thy life becometh part of Him. Can anything exceed in happiness the position thou hast just been meditating? The Holy Spirit saith that it *can* be exceeded, and telleth thee that DEATH is the means whereby thou mayest gain even more than the hiding of thy life in Christ hath brought thee. *Death?* Thou art hard in believing it possible ! Surely death can offer nothing greater? Even thy *earthly* life hath some kind of happiness, but death hath none. *There* all is cold, and dark, and gloomy, and corrupt, and offensive. Yea, O soul, thou art right that the death of the body is but a gloomy subject, for pain and anguish may attend it. But hast thou yet to learn that beyond the grave of Death, lieth thy *true life*? It will be the hour of death that will reveal to thee the things which as yet are holden from thine eyes ; and if thou hast striven in life, thou shalt find death to be indeed thy fullest *gain*. . . . Then paint the likeness of the moment of thy

death before thee now. Thy bed surrounded by thy weeping friends and relatives, who vainly strive to make thee think they are not in tears, lest thou shouldest be pained. Thy home and comforts all departing ; the church in which thy worship was paid ; thy goods and treasures beyond thy power to keep. And amidst the scene *thyself*, the object of interest and concern, no longer in thy health but weakly lying down, smitten by a power that has proved itself greater than thine own. Can this be *gain* ? Then thy poor shattered body, of which the silver cord is to be loosed, and the golden bowl broken, awaiting the moment of departure ! Those eyes of thine, those ears, that tongue, those hands—their toils all over, their sins beyond thy atonement or justification ! And but one more moment, till they release their hold, and death comes ! O where is thy gain ?

Par. 28.] Again another moment, and the released spirit *finding* its gain ! Life was glorious in its brilliancy, and thou thoughtest it was impossible to surpass all the varied beauties of its days and years. Yet now that it has gone, thy soul finding itself in a new sphere, refreshing itself in the fuller presence of God, can discover wherein death has been a *gain*. All imperfections falling off, like cords cut, and the soul at liberty to revel in the celestial perfections of God. All that hampered and made worship a dreary thing *withdrawn* ; and the cloud of self

torn back that the soul might have nothing to impede its vision of the Most High ! The distance that sin and the world had so long placed between the Redeemed and the Redeemer now *bridged over* ; the journey *completed* ; the blessed home *arrived at* ; and the feeble, broken, worn out, shattered soul, *at rest* upon the eternal shore, anchored by the weighty influence of love ! . . . And in that last dying agony, which shall come to thee, before thy "gain," in that dark hour before the dawn, thou wilt feed thyself upon the tokens of Christ, on His Body and His Blood ; and thy life, having been made a part of His, thy trials also having been borne by Him in Whom thou didst hide thyself of old, thou wilt find that thou shalt be ushered—from a place where he revealed Himself only in part—to the home He hath prepared for thee, where thou shalt gain the FULL vision of His wondrous beauty ! . . . Then, O my soul, spare not thine energies for one moment, until thou art daily carrying out the lessons which thy Lord will implant in thee even now. He will bid thee make the partial vision of Himself, which thou hast gained by faith, a preparation for thy eternal *gain* in death. And He will also tell thee to be content with the little night of thy temporal suffering for His sake, so that thou mayest awake up with Him hereafter to the dazzling light of the Eternal Day, and thy truest spiritual gain.

Meditation V.

“JESUS SEARCHING FOR HIS BRETHREN.”

“And he said, I seek my brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.”—Gen. xxxvii. 16.

Par. 29.] How often, in the careful reading of the Bible, hast thou discovered, O my soul, that one part answereth unto another. And in the lives of the Patriarchs thou hast often found a wonderful foreshadowing of the divine life of Jesus. Thou hast frequently noticed this beautiful likeness in the story of Joseph, and yet thou hast, perhaps, passed over the words which are to form thy present meditation with but little attention. Strive, then, to place thyself in the right mind to understand their teaching now. Taking Joseph as the type of thy Lord, thou wilt have no difficulty, in settling the other circumstances of the narrative, to make thy devout contemplation useful and profitable unto thee. And notice how clearly the Holy Ghost hath pictured the hatred of the world to thy Saviour in the bitterness and jealousy with which the brethren of Joseph gazed upon him. Yet behold

the love of the father unto his son! . . . Then see, O my soul, how, in the hearing of the *dreams* of Joseph's future honours by his brethren, is shown to thee the manner in which the world should scorn the declarations of Jesus as to His dignity and rightful glory. And remember, again, the mystical meaning of the sending of Joseph by his father to seek for his brethren who hated him, and of his consequent loss of liberty by being sold into the hands of the Ishmaelites. Canst thou not see foreshadowings herein of the advent of the Son of God, when He should come to look for His lost brethren, and to look for *thee*? . . . Therefore, thou hast good scope for thy meditation to-day in the answer of Joseph to the man who met him on his way. Thou mayest apply it to thyself, and discover therein the object and the resolution of thy Lord, when He vouchsafed to become of a like nature with thyself, that He might win thee back again after that thou hadst gone away from thy Father's house, and hadst wandered with thy fellows afar off in the pastures which thou thoughtest to be the best for thy earthly satisfaction and use.

Par. 30.] Begin thy earnest contemplation by a devout remembrance of the most divine *unselfishness* which is exhibited in the going-forth of Jesus from His Father's side, to search for careless sinners such as thee. Consider *what* it was that He resigned when He vouchsafed to empty Himself of all His glory, and to lower

Himself to our likeness and image, so defiled and sin-stained ! He resigned, for the period of His human life, in a mysterious manner, all the immediate adoration of countless hosts, that He might lead *thee* to adore Him. There was a void in Heaven which could not be filled until His glorious Ascension. He entirely gave up His own most blessed peace and rest, and willingly embraced a life of hardship and toil, that He might make for thee a resting-place above. And wilt thou not, in thy gratitude, adore His wondrous humiliation, whereby thy ransom has been purchased ? . . . And then remember, O my soul, that His special purpose in coming down to earth was for the lifting-up of thy blinded self, and for the finding of that which was lost. He came to *seek* His brethren, and to know where they fed their flocks. How often hast thou run away from His commandments and judgments, so that thou mightest drink deeply of the pleasures of the world ! How far hast thou wandered away from Him in thy search after the things that perish ! And still, knowing, as He knew, that thou wouldest *reject* Him, He came *seeking*, that He might find thee ! . . . Consider what relationship it is that He establisheth with thee when He calleth thee His *Brother*. Imagine the closeness of such a union ! The same as Himself in thy hopes, thy home, and thy reward : a fellow-heir with Him of the Kingdom of God, and an inheritor of the promises which He, by His life,

hath made so secure ! Is not this enough, O my soul, to constrain thee to adore Him, and His most blessed unselfishness ?

Par. 31.] Now bring thyself into a fitting frame of mind to consider the manners in which thy Lord *seeketh* thee. It is no mean "looking" that He hath undertaken. He hath purposed to Himself to make thee entirely His own, and to assure thee of thy relationship to Him. It is with that purpose that He came, even that He might not return till He had actually made thee to feel thyself as His younger *brother*. Dost thou not remember His words when He was told of the waiting of His Virgin Mother and His brethren during the period of His earthly ministry ? Did He not assure them then that they who were obedient unto Him were, in their obedience, closely united to Him ? and hast thou not also learned that by thy call in Baptism thou hast become a member of Christ ? Then He needeth only now to *remind* thee of these things to make thee lift up the voice of thy affection unto Heaven, whence He also now *seeketh* for thee. . . . He *seeketh* for thee, because He loveth thee, and because He would thereby appease the stern anger of His Father. Thou hast gone out to thy labours, and into the world, and He will follow thee even into the very midst of thy vocations, that He may claim thee for Himself. O how deeply and how tenderly He hath loved thee ! Nothing would He permit to

hinder Him in His search. Dost thou not remember with shame and contrition the many times thou hast hidden thyself behind some stone of offence that thou mightest escape Him, but still He discovered thee and led thee on ! . . . And He *seeketh* thee, because He hath been sent by His Father to reclaim thee, and bring thee home. The Father loved thee, but in justice He could not receive thee as thou wert ; so He sent His only-begotten Son, Whom He loved so well, that He might call thee back, and find thee exercise for thy religious life in the unceasing adoration of thy thankful heart.

Par. 32. But while He goeth on to find thee, it may be that He meeteth a stray soul, of whom He enquireth concerning thee ! O picture His holy and most loving anxiety when the *first* question He asketh is about thee ! He loveth thee as though there were none other *but* thee in the wide world ! He craveth after thee, as though thou hadst always served Him without disobedience ; and hadst never given Him a pain. This journey is for *thee* ! Think not, poor soul of mine, that thou hast been forgotten or neglected. Imagine not, that the powers of thy life were too feeble to entitle thee to the notice and esteem of thy Saviour. Nay, He hath come on purpose that He might reward thee, and count up all thy sorrows, and thy pains, and refresh thee with the brightness of His Face, and the warmth of His Love. . . .

He asketh concerning thee, of the one whom He meeteth nearest unto thee! Doth not this enquiry fill thee with alarm, lest that which is closest to thee, be not good? Thy way of living in forgetfulness of God, and in entire satisfaction with thyself, may make thee fear, lest thy most intimate connection be also *not* of God. And when thy Lord saith, "I seek my brethren," He may hear an answer from thy friends, that *thou* art none of His! Canst thou test thy life by this? Wilt thou not consider that such as thy chosen friends and acquaintances are, such also, of necessity, must thou be likewise? . . . Then remember that thy Lord seeketh thee in *thine own way*! He doth not go by any *celestial* road, to reach thy affections or thy love; but even as He took thy *nature* upon Him, so too he now meeteth thee in the circumstances of thy *natural, daily* life. He travelleth by the *same* paths *thou* choosest, and journeyeth by the *same* roads, and He *must* meet thee sooner or later. With His most infinite wisdom He already knoweth all about thee, but still He desireth to let thee *know* that He hath found thee out.

Par. 33.] Observe then, O my soul, the manner in which He followeth thee. He willeth to know, not only of thy companions, or of thy pursuits, but of the places where thou feedest thy flock. He knoweth that in thy heart are implanted crowds of imaginations and desires,

which will either find their fulfilment and satisfaction in Him, or in the world. And so He desireth to know what are the "pastures" in which thou lovest to feed this flock of thoughts, of fancies and of wishes. Canst thou answer with any amount of real candour, that thou delightest, more especially, to provide for the fulfilment of them all, in the green pastures of His ever gracious love? Or hath the world already claimed thee for its own and made thee by thy frequent participation in *its* pleasures, wholly unable to break off from their indulgence? . . . What mayest thou count then amongst thy choicest joys? Consider with thyself upon what thy imaginations principally fix themselves, and whereunto thy fancies generally resort? Tell thyself honestly whether they are in the direction of God, or of the world? Whether they turn to thyself, or thy Maker and Saviour? Thou wilt find it easy enough to be good, in the *presence* of good people, or under the *recent* influence of good thoughts; but what hast thou to say about the times when by a separation from these, the world hath made thee cold and hard? . . . Take further into thy consideration, that thou art held responsible unto God for the quantities of thy *flock* of desires and whims. Thou art not an independent being whose actions concern none but themselves: but thou hast to account reasonably for everything which thou hast allowed to affect thee, temporally or spiritually. Dost

thou not quail then at the sound of thy Lord's voice, when He asketh after thy manner of living, and thy course of enjoyments, and thy *present abode*?

Par. 34.] And for thy encouragement if thou art righteous, as for thy increased terror if thou art worldly; consider that thy Lord *persevered* in His generous *work*. He will not allow thee to say hereafter, that thou didst not hear, or that thou couldest not get to understand His word. He speaketh plainly, loudly, and imperatively. Yet withal he is quiet and mild, rather *entreating* thee than commanding. It is as though he would say to thee, "O wandering soul of Mine, that hast been so long content with the *husks* in place of the *bread*: come near unto Me, and if thy sins be even as scarlet, yet shalt thou become pure and white, when thou findest shelter and everlasting rest in Me." Why wilt thou any longer hang back, or doubt as to the expediency of giving thyself unreservedly to Him? Thy time here, at best, is but short, and thou hast none to lose in waiting? . . . Think not that the circumstances of thy life do not *permit* thee to accept the messages of God's loving kindness and salvation. Thou canst not err more greatly. It is His Mission to *seek* thee, and He doth not intend to resign it. Thou *shalt* be sought, and sought again by Him, and if when thou art found at last, thou dost still manage to elude His love,

He will seek thee *again* ! And if once more thou forsake Him, He *still* will search afresh. He will search until He find thee, or else until death and judgment overtake thee. . . . Yet, O my soul, *presume* not upon His intention to seek for thee so long, imagining that if He find thee *in the end* it will do. Thou knowest not *how* much longer His kind forbearance is to last. Thou mayest not call upon His generous love, as though it were *due* to thee. It is only during His Divine pleasure that He will search. How fearful will thy fate be then, if *eternally* thou dost discover thyself separated from His side, *only because in time thou wouldest not be found*.

Par. 35.] Be astonished, when thou dost meditate upon the unkindness of Joseph's brethren to him at the end of his journey, and dost remember, that when in the end of time God sent forth His only begotten Son, thou, together with the cruel Jews, didst reject and sell Him ! Vainly dost thou think that if thou hadst been there when thy Lord was crucified, that thou wouldest have been bold enough to follow *Him*, rather than the wicked mob. Thy sins, each day, proclaim anew and anew, thy part in the cry they raised, when they clamoured for His crucifixion. Thou art in the position of Joseph's brethren, and *hast* sold thy LORD into the hands of His cruel enemies. . . . Have not thine eyes been often hurt by the

brightness of the light which JESUS cast upon thy path? Hast thou not often tried to escape it, and to flee into the darkness of thy pollution, that thou mightest avoid the burning of conscience, or the promptings of a deathless remorse? Thou hast been at thy duties, and hast seen thy "Joseph," coming in the distance, with the kindly welcome and interest of thy Father, and thou hast rebelled in the wilfulness of thy heart at Him who was burdened and laden with thy welfare. . . . By thy actions and feelings thou hast often called thy Lord a "Dreamer," and hast thought 'to put an end to all heart-burnings and self-convictions by putting Him out of the way! Yea, thou hast sold Him into the hands of enemies, but it hath only made His love more powerful, and He hath forgotten the memories of the past, in the search He maketh for thee *still*! Thou mayest have rejected, scorned, rebuked, despised, and sold thy Lord, time after time, but *still* He repeateth His messages of love, *still* He knocketh at the door of thy heart, waiting until thou wilt break open the door, and make Him thy welcome visitor and friend, permitting Him to say, that He *hath found* thee after all!



Meditation VI.

“UNFULFILLED DUTIES.”

“Ye have not passed this way heretofore.—Joshua iii. 4.

Par. 36.] Hast thou never thought, O my soul, that the progress of this world represented unto thee the advancement of thy spiritual life? When thou hast first learned new things which seemed wonderful and curious unto thee, and thou hast stayed to enquire more concerning them, have they not reminded thee of the many events and circumstances in thy life before God, that either had seemed, or would seem, equally curious and astonishing? But whether thou *hast* thus reasoned with thyself or no, still the truth remains the same for thy meditation now, that, far as thou hast advanced in the exercises of thy religion, and much as thou mayest know of the things that are hidden from the eye of the world, still there remaineth very much *more* for thee to learn, and much greater steps in holiness for thee yet to take. There are, indeed, many ways which heretofore thou hast not passed. . . . Be constrained, then, to

the confession of thy ignorance and thy backwardness. Thy *ignorance*, because thou didst imagine thy journey of faith to be accomplished ; thy *backwardness*, because thou hast so often shrunk from the following out of what was laid before thee in the open Providence of thy God. And allow these remembrances to work in thee a salutary feeling of humility, by which thou shalt be enabled to rise to the contemplations that are before thee, and discover wherein thou yet lackest, and what portions of thy journey are as yet unfulfilled. . . . Furthermore, suffer not thyself to forget that thou needest to cherish a spirit of *carefulness*, seeing that the way before thee is unknown and untried. Thou knowest not what dangers or what trials may await thee in carrying out thy journey to the land of rest which is promised unto thee ; neither dost thou know what peculiar circumstances may be thine as thou travellest on, for is it not true that "thou hast not passed this way heretofore" ?

Par. 37.] Take the daily duties of thy busy life, and discover how much further thou mightest have carried out what was *good*, and how greatly thou mightest have retrenched the *evil* ! When, with the opening dawn, thy mind once more began its busy round of thought, thou didst, perhaps, permit it to roam at large. Thy wants and cares sprang up unchecked to take the prominent portion of thy imagination ; or it may

be that the speedy realization of some cherished project of thy heart made thee forgetful of aught else but it. So thou didst not even *attempt* to make thy mind engage itself with God. That was a way of exercising it, which thou didst not dream of; a way thou hadst never trodden before! Yet how profitable would thy meditations have become, if in the still and silent morning light, before the world engaged thy time and labours, thou hadst remembered Him upon thy bed, and thought upon Him when thou wert waking! . . . Then thou didst rise and prepare thyself for thy meeting with the world. How well thou mightest have made every department of thy toilet the symbol of divine truth, and turned common things into heavenly! Might not thy very *clothing* have reminded thee of thy spiritual adornment? Or the cleansing of thy body by water, of the refreshing and purifying of the Blessed Spirit of God? And yet thou didst allow all occasions such as these to pass by unobserved, and thou didst refuse the truths that they taught. . . . And how well mightest thou have learned a lesson, when thou wentest forth from thy room to meet thy friends at their morning meal, of that time when, from the dust of death and imprisonment of the grave, thy reanimated frame shall join the ransomed, at the Bridegroom's Feast, on the Resurrection morn! Thou hast thought these things too simple,—perhaps even too *foolish*,—for thy mind to dwell on, and thou hast preferred

the emptier fancies of thy worldly connections, and refused, in these little things, to go by a way thou hadst not passed before.

Par. 38.] Trace the circumstances of thy life during the remainder of thy ordinary day. Thou hast had two ways continually opening before thee ; the *one* which thou hadst taken all thy life, and the *other*, an untried way as yet,—the way of God. And because the latter hath seemed insignificant to thy weak imagination, thou hast preferred to continue in the old one. Thou hast, perhaps, set forth upon the fulfilment of thy daily business, and thou hast met with some trifling unpleasantness, or disappointment, or accident, and thou hast forgotten thy forbearance and charity, and hast used harsh words or unkind language, because thou wert treading in thy *own* old way, instead of that way which, although it lay before thee, thou hadst never passed along before. Whereas thou oughtest to have enquired wherein this way of God would alter thee, if thou wouldest take but the pains to follow it. . . . The church-bell did sound in thine ears for thee to enter in, and join the daily prayers of God's people, and thou *hadst* time to spare ; but again thou didst prefer thy *own* way, and wouldest not go by the way that led thee unto thy Lord. Or, if even thou *didst* go, thy attitude, thy thoughts, and thy attention were all bending towards thy *own* road again, and thou didst not care to think of God. So,

too, with the offerings of thy private devotions. Have they not been cold and dead, mere *forms* which thou didst maintain for appearance sake? And yet they might have been so refreshing unto thee, and so full of heavenly power, if thou hadst but turned a little out of thy ordinary course! . . . Then thou hast forgotten, too, the way of *ejaculatory* prayer, and hast lost so much by this alienation from God. Thou mightest have trodden on such pleasant places in the fear of the Lord, and have offered unto Him such entire devotion of thy *thoughts*, by the consecration of them all to Him in sudden messages of prayer, sent up amidst thy daily toils. But *this* way was unknown to thee, for thou hadst not learned to pass along its helpful course.

Par. 39.] And now, my soul, consider with thyself the more *direct* measures in which thou hast not trodden, or passed by, the real and happy way of life and of God. Take for thy earnest and heart-searching contemplation the usual occupation of thy weekly day of rest. No business, or earthly toil, hath there been to disturb and try thee, and thou hast, as it were, been left entirely alone, *either* that thou mightest spend that solitude with God, or that thou mightest spend it in indulgence and in secular converse. Enquire with thyself which thou hast chosen? When the two ways have been opened out before thee, alas! thou hast generally taken thy own, thy cherished way

of old, in which thou couldst best sport with the life thy Lord vouchsafed thee, and best forget thy responsibility before Him. God hath every week reminded thee that there was a way by which thou hadst not passed hitherto, but thou didst mock at the reminder, and didst follow thy own choice. . . . If thou hast been within the sacred walls of the Church, and hast stayed throughout a portion of the service, thou hast perhaps forsaken the Lord just at the moment when He was most especially to come! The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Communion has been begun, and thou hast turned thy back upon It when thou mightest so easily have devoted time enough to stay, that at least thou mightest *adore*, if thou couldst not *receive*. The singing, thou hast listened too, and perhaps enjoyed; but thou hast had no part therein thyself, for the way of worship is perhaps a way thou dost not care to pass! . . . And hast thou not to accuse thyself because of the many holy Sunday evenings, which thou didst employ like common ones, and in which thy earthly life seemed unaltered, unless by thy increased liberty and freedom? There was such a holy and refreshing way opened out for thee to pass by then, in the calm and earnest meditation of thy life and its varied duties, that if thou hadst but been inclined, those hours might have advanced thee very far towards thy eternal rest.

Par. 40.] Yet if by the good grace of God, thou hast had at least an *inclination* to pass by the way which He hath appointed thee, then be encouraged, O my soul, to do so in the continual exercises of thy devoutest prayers, and deeds of love and mercy. Thou hast no strength of thyself indeed, but this will make thee more powerful in God, Who will never deny thee His. Imagine then the quiet voice of thy Sovereign Master urging thee by the repetition of this truth in thine ears. And be taught by the constant sound, to know that there is a work for thee to fulfil yet, and that thy life hath many things in it which need mending and improving. Thou hast then very much to do ; thy duties are only now *beginning*, and thou hast so little time in which to complete them, and fit thyself for thy high destiny. The more thou dost listen to the words of JESUS, the more will thy sight be enabled to see the *many* respects in which there is a *way* for thee to follow, which until now hath been obscured and clouded by thy sin. . . . It will humble thee mightily to know how thy old manner of life was not satisfactory in God's sight, notwithstanding all the praise thou didst heap upon thyself because of it. It will make thee learn to confess as thou hast never confessed before, that in thee, that is, in thy flesh, there is no good thing. Falling down in the utmost prostration of thy humility thou wilt crave for knowledge, thou wilt ask for guidance,

and entreat for deliverance from all thy past self-satisfaction. . . . But thou mayest at first be at a loss to discover *wherein* especially thy way hath been defective, and wherein *especially* thou hast now to begin afresh. Yet thou shalt not long *continue* in doubt. Thy God, ever merciful, will enable thee to find out—perhaps *all at once* that the multitude of ways may dazzle thee ; or *one by one* as thou art able to bear the revelation,—He will enable thee to find out all that is good for thee to know, about thyself and thy past imperfections, and thy future plans of amendment.

Par. 41.] When thou mayest perhaps the least expect it, God will show thee a way thou *never thoughtest* of ! Oh, how thy remorse will consume thy pride, when thou rememberest the frequent occasions on which *this* way was opened to thee, and thou, like Balaam, wert *blind* to the same, and didst vainly rush, even to thy destruction, against that which was the obstacle in thy way ! And how will contrition melt thee when thou dost discover the multitude of ways, by which thou hast *not* passed, which were intended to draw thee into greater and closer union with thy Lord. Thou wilt then behold such quantities of lost opportunities, which God gave thee, wherein thou mightest have rebuked sin, turned some sinner, or been turned thyself. And so thou wilt find that the greater thy desire to know which way God hath pointed out to thee,

so much the more will thy spiritual vision increase, and grow in brightness. Thou wilt find that the Way which thou thoughtest so hard and difficult was indeed the way of peace.

. . . And consider again, my soul, that the reason why God's choice seemed so hard, was generally because thou lovedst to have thy *own* way instead of following His. It was not the darkness of the way, but the contrast that it presented unto thee, when thou didst suddenly turn to it from the dazzling and shining tinsel of thy earthly enjoyments. But when thou hast closed thine eyes to these, and hast for a time been buried in the darkness of thy repentance, thou wilt be astonished to find the way thou thoughtest dark, to have become quite bright!

. . . So then thou wilt see how that the change is not in the way itself, but in the different condition of thy soul in gazing at it. And surely thou wilt need but little inducement to make thee turn and run towards the newly opened pathway, when thou hast made up thy mind that it is the *best*. O soul, how vainly hast thou thought of thyself, and how little hast thou thought of God, all through thy life, until thou hast learned that the way by which He inviteth thee is indeed the best.

Par. 42.] And now consider one more *danger* that thou hast escaped by making up thy mind to accept for *good*, the call of thy God into *His* way. For thou hast escaped the

subtle snare of Satan, which he presenteth to thee, by allowing thee to *imagine* thy way already perfect. He maketh thee to pursue a path, which *resembleth* the Way of God, and by which, so many have been *mised*. Hast thou not much to thank thy Lord for, in the deliverance which He hath wrought for thee, in saving thee from this snare? Shall not thy heart be filled with gratitude for this grace? He hath borne with thee so long, and echoed His words of warning in thy ears so often, that unless it had been of His Divine compassion, thou wouldest have had no further chance. But He hath now brought thee in sight of His own Way, and doth remind thee that thou hast not passed by it *before*. . . . Resolve then within thyself that thou will no longer *delay* thy entrance. If thou hast now again the chance, and there is yet another opportunity of beginning thy journey afresh, then say to thyself, that by the grace of God, nothing will prevent thee doing so. Seek out opportunities of making thy return most true and perfect. Let the world find out immediately, that it hath lost another soul, and that henceforth thy journey and thy travelling shall be upon the Way which,—until now, thou hadst not passed. . . . Then, my soul, there shall be joy in the midst of Heaven on thy account, and thou shalt find happiness in thyself such as thou hast never felt until this blessed time! Strike out for thyself thy new plans and purposes, and make thy whole life

in the future, declare the gratitude with which thou art filled, because of the gracious loving-kindness of thy God, Who in pity, forgiving all thy wandering steps, hath brought thee once again within the reach of His mercy, and hath pointed thee to that blessed Way of Duty by which thou didst so long neglect to pass.



Meditation VII.

"THE SOUL SEPARATED FROM JESUS."

"And Peter followed afar off."—St. Luke xxii. 54.

Par. 43.] Contemplate, with concern to thyself, the *character* of that Apostle of whom it is said that he followed "afar off." From all that thou hast been accustomed to hear of him, and from all that thou hast read concerning him, thou hast, doubtless, pictured him as a man of power and of super-excellent determination. Ever foremost among his fellow Apostles, to act as their spokesman, to lead them on in their labours, and to declare in the utterance of his words, the depth of their faith, he hath appeared to thee as one who would be *more* than likely to resist all powers of temptation, and to fight victoriously even to the end. Thou hast striven sometimes, it may be, to imitate his zeal, and the fire of his ardent love, and the vigour of his earnest profession, and hast succeeded or failed, according as thy strength was placed in God. But thou hast thought well of the work and the deeds of St. Peter, as of a man deserving

thy veneration. . . . Often, too, in the reading of that sacred history with which he is connected, thou hast, perhaps, wished that thou mightest have had the opportunity of doing the work that was especially committed unto him. Thy zeal hath increased by the consideration of his, and thy energy been forwarded by the example of what was so perfect in him until the hour of his fall. And well it is that thou shouldest thus notice and emulate the good qualities of so great a man, for thou hast much to copy from his life. . . . Yet withal thou needest to remember,—not for thy own miserable vanity, but for thy precaution,—that the vigorous, self-denying affection of St. Peter was limited by the sad failing, unto which, doubtless, thou hast often been a partner,—the failing which led him to his fall, even the withholding of his trust in the power of his God, and the too great dependence which he had in the firmness and strength of his own resolution.

Par. 44.] And now, for thy edification, do thou trace through the successive stages of the narrative, the growth of that self-dependent resolution, which—propagated by pride,—was to bring about the fall of the Apostle whose glory was in his powers of self-control. Thou rememberest how thy Lord had lovingly warned him, as He so often hath done the like to thee, of the desire of Satan for his overthrow ; and how He had prayed for His Apostle, that his faith

might not fail him, in the hour of his trial, as He hath also prayed for thee. And thou hast heard the enthusiastic words of S. Peter, promising even more than He was asked to, that he would follow His Lord unto prison and unto death. Ah, soul, how frequently hast thou vowed in the moments of thy spiritual excitement, that thou wouldest also thus follow thy Lord even through all His sufferings and pain, and yet at the first approach of the terror which appalled thee, thou hast given up thy resolve and hidden thy coward self behind the curtains of thy flesh. . . . See too, how the Apostle further begins his probation well, or at least with energy. He will fear nothing until the moral strength gives way. He will cut off all obstacles that present themselves, even to the wounding of the servants of his Master's foes, and he will exceed his meekness by his indignation until the gentle rebuke shall fall upon his ear: "Put up thy sword into the sheath again." . . . Then he will go again in the fulfilment of his boast into the very midst of temptation, and will place himself with those who are most likely to make him fall. Yet he thinks not of the danger, he imagines his dauntless resolution will be enough to bear him up, and to turn away the desire of fulfilling his temptation. O soul of mine, how like unto thyself in all these things, unless it be that thou hast not even so much to be proud of as he, in the strength of thy *will*. Yet notice the

increasing influence of Satan working in the soul of the Apostle until he had overcome him altogether.

Par. 45.] Gently and unobserved doth the power of sin overcome thee. S. Peter went his way into the midst of temptation, glorying in his imagined power of resistance, but even as he went, he gradually became overcome. See, O soul, a picture of thyself in him, when from closest communion with JESUS, and boldest conflict for His Name, he gradually gets *behind*. The crowd thickens, and the multitude of the people press round about him, and with their many words and much excitement make his mind to whirl, and his thoughts to wander, until he puts a *space* between his Lord and himself. Still, on they go: the procession winds its way, and Judas, the betrayer, leads on the evil work, and Peter becomes fearful by the influence brought to bear upon him, and faints in his resolution, and *allows* the distance to continue between His Lord, and himself. . . . And then Satan taking fuller possession of that distant follower, bids him, all unknown even to himself, to think that he *is* fulfilling his duty even now. Is he not following? Can he have no excuse for the division between His Master and himself? Have not the people crowded between them? And *though* he *is* far off from Him—for Whom but a little while ago he vowed to die,—is he not still *following* just as truly? Can he

not then be ready at a moment's call? O soul, thou hast often been in like frame, and hast bridged over all thy difficulties by thy false arguments and consolations. . . . That poor self-satisfied man no longer now is troubled by these thoughts. His Lord is to be tried, but why should he run himself into danger without any need? His promises forgotten; his strength failing; his memory dying out; he stands a ready prey to the malice of his enemy. Close by him his false friend, the Devil, stands watching his chance, while his Lord is, in all truth, put away very "far off."

Par. 46.] Now watch the consequences of the overcoming of S. Peter by the malice of his enemy, who hath waited for the moment to come. Until now there was but as it were, a *venial* sin in the momentary terror having induced him to separate himself from the immediate company of Jesus. Now that shall lead on to something worse. It hath been but the *preparation* of his heart for its entire overthrow. He stands waiting for the trial, and no sooner he there, than there cometh one to him who doth recognise him as among the followers of the Divine Prisoner. And the whole fabric of the Apostle's resolution breaketh down, and he *denieth* his Lord. O soul, thou too hast often been separated by thy sin afar off from God, and it is *then* that thou hast learned how to deny in word and deed thy Master from

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Whom thou wert thus separated. . . *Another* cometh in a moment, made by the permitted influence of the Evil One, to accuse S. Peter, almost in the presence of his last accuser, of his connection with his Lord. He can no longer resist the power that is upon him and easily denieth Him again, and perhaps satisfieth himself with the thought that it is necessary to tell this lie, that he may be of further use in the possible rescue of Jesus from His persecutors. And thou hast often done the same. Thou hast said, *but this once* the untruth might escape thee, that thou mightest, as thou didst think, do greater good in another place and at another time ! . . . But is there not a more dreadful thing awaiting this self-confident Apostle even yet? Behold a *third* accuser cometh to him with the same words upon his lips. And then the hitherto religious man bursteth forth into coarse abuse and swearing, and summeth up his sins in the emphatic denial of that which all the while he knoweth to be the truth. See then, my soul, the progress of the powers of evil, and beware lest they encompass *thee*.

Par. 47.] But what is that, my soul, which maketh the Apostle weep? But one moment since, the words of scorning and of abuse escaped him, and now his eyes are streaming, and he sinketh down as though exhausted with the most overpowering grief. His Lord hath *reminded* him of his denial. The sound which

in a brighter day He had assured him should not come until he had fallen into sin, *had* sounded in his ears, "the cock crew," and like a flash of fire the remembrance of those gentle words had returned, and Jesus, although so *far off*, turned round and gazed upon His servant. So, my soul, it hath been with thee. Thou hast thought it was impossible for thee to sin in the way of which thou wert warned, and thou didst indignantly repel all thought of thy possible fall. Yet when the world drew thee off from thy Lord, and by that distance thy devotion became cooled and hardened, *then* thou didst yield little by little, until thou didst give thyself up entirely unto sin and openly rebelled. It was *then* that some remembrance of thy former life, or thy old associations sprang up, and reminded thee of the time of thy innocence and professions. . . . And so it was that thy Lord turned His pitiful look upon thee, and thy conscience smote thee, and made thy tears to flow. It was a look that thou couldest not mistake, and it produced most holy fervour of amendment, and desires of repentance. Yet didst *thou*, like S. Peter, re-awaken all thy bold resolution, and *openly* repent, even as thou hadst *openly* sinned? Didst thou turn thy face away, and *go out*, and hide thyself from the presence of all, so that they might *miss* thee, and know the reason of thy absence from them? . . . Remember that the greatness of the Apostle's future glory, was the fruit of his so earnest repentance.

Thou, too, hast sinned as deeply as he, but thou mayest likewise repent as heartily, if thou *wilt*.

Par. 48.] Now thou hast some practical conclusions to arrive at before thou leavest thy meditation alone. Consider how thy God is *still within reach*, even though thy sins have separated thee from Him afar off. The darkest night of sin may have spread its hangings round thy soul, and thou mayest not be able to discern the merest *outline* of the Form of thy Lord, and His Face may be forgotten by thee. *Yet*—(how sweet this consolation)—He is close at hand to save thee and stretch out His guiding and protecting Hand. There is a look of divine pity, for thy sins, and a look of pardon in the future upon thy true repentance, which thou canst not gainsay, or turn from. If thou canst but *once* catch that wondrous gaze, and take it to thyself, then thou wilt never have again to *ask* whether there is hope and mercy for thee. It will *seal* them for thee beyond proof. . . . Yet realize, O my soul, how that the separation which thou hast made between thyself and JESUS, is one which may not *immediately* be done away with. Thou dost not read in the Holy Word of God, that S. Peter had one opportunity of speaking, or of confessing his repentance to his Lord *until after the Resurrection*. Between his sin and his reunion, there were the trial, the condemnation, the crucifixion,

death, and burial, and the Resurrection of JESUS. Picture the sorrow and unspeakable remorse, with which the repentance of the comfortless Apostle were accompanied all through that time, and rebel not when thy Lord doth not give thee immediate consolation now. It is good for thee to endure grief and anguish to make thy contrition perfect. . . . And learn, again, from the *first* words of thy Lord after His return to earth from the grave, when He sent a message unto *Peter individually*, that, though He try thee for thy sins, and make thee lament over the distance which they have separated thee from Him, that still if He see thee repent, He will send thee a message of love and of welcome, in due time.

Par. 49.] Then what shall thy resolutions be like, because of all these things? How long hast thou been quite content with a religion that kept thee *afar off* from the tenderest love, and most beautiful communion with thy Lord! Thy sins have been permitted to take root downward, and to bring fruit upward, until they have attained a firm hold over thy actions, and thou hast been content with *future* hopes in place of *present* joys! Thou hast not loved to unite thyself to JESUS. Thy thoughts have been on thyself; thy union hath been with the things of the world, and thou hast kept Him, and His divine relationship only in the *distance*, and *afar off*, that thou mightest take thine own

time in reaching them. And so, while thou didst not embrace Him, the Devil embraced thee! O soul, see that it be not too late to tear thyself away, and run into the arms of Him, who never casteth out any who come to Him in faith. . . . Determine never to allow thy sins to penetrate the strong bond of union which thy Lord hath cemented between Himself and thee, in thy baptism and in thy Communions. Be thou more and more attached to His services, and if thou hast been content with *one* act of worship, begin the profitable use of *two*. In an equal proportion act with regard to *all* thy duties. Wherein thou dost mark a want of close acquaintance, be it in the reading of thy Bible, the offering of thy prayers, or alms, or the exercise of thy Christian virtues *therein* begin at once to bridge the distance that there was, by increased devotion and service. . . . And in the midst of all thy toils and labours and failings, strive, O my soul, to remember, that in a little while thy time of probation will be over, and thy home of eternal beauty will have dawned. *Then* there will be no danger of being *afar off* from JESUS, when He shall have given thee thy place at His Side.



Meditation VIII.

"THE DISPENSATION OF HOPE."

"Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."—2 S. Peter i. 19.

Par. 50.] If it were not the good pleasure of God to vouchsafe thee the bright illumination of *hope*, thy earthly life would make thee to despair. Thou hast had so many trials, and disappointments even from thy earliest childhood, that thy heart hath sunk within thee oftentimes of late, when the burden of thy cares weighed heavily upon thee. Thou hast found it hard to get comfort in the world, for thy pains were not sufficiently felt by thy neighbour to enable him to offer thee the gift of his sympathy; thy troubles of mind were secret to thyself and thou didst not *care* to reveal them; thy wants and woes were greater often than thy friend had *power* to relieve. And so thou hast been depressed and sad, and lonely hast thou sat watching the darkening sky that gathered in blackness all around, and hast wondered *why* it was that thou wert permitted to endure so

much heavier a load than any of thy fellow travellers, and *why* it was that no relief came unto thee. . . . But even as thou wert meditating on thy dark and weary fate, the scene became altered, though the trials still remained! The deeper the darkness became, the higher shone the star of HOPE that had dawned in thy heart, and whispered its sweet message of consoling peace, bidding thee trust even to the end the goodness of thy God, in His dealings with thee. And this hope increased until at length thou didst become *imbued* with it, to the forgetfulness even of that, which but a moment since, filled thee with alarm and grief. . . . Thy trials then no longer overcame thee, but even as thou didst continue to turn them over in thy mind, they themselves became illumined with the light by which thy darkness of doubt had been expelled, and the whole scene of thy life and its miseries seemed awaking from the gloom of an impenetrable night to the brightness of that dawn, in which the shining of the DAY STAR filled thee with joy.

Par. 51.] Contemplate the affectionate regard wherewith thy Lord visiteth thee with His *hope*. In thy knowledge of His humility, He hath already bidden thee confide thy expectation by the perpetual increase of thy *faith* in His redemption. He waiteth for thee now to excite thy adoring admiration in His encouraging

words, wherein He setteth before thee, the reasons wherefore thou *mayest* hope. He would remind thee, O my soul, of thy safety in Him, by the remembrance of His agony and passion, and of His wondrous atonement, and would enquire of thee, if the *certainty* of these facts did not warrant thee in believing Him to be filled with love towards thee. And when thou hast once grasped the idea of His unceasing attachment for thee, then thou wilt need no words of man, to induce thee to return Him the offering of thyself. It will be the freest token of thy heart, and one which will afford thee real pleasure in the bestowal. . . . Thy Lord inviteth thee with His *hope* whenever thou art inclined to render unto Him increasing gratitude for His gifts to thee. Thou hast heard it said that "God giveth fresh blessing for every thanksgiving He receiveth," and He will make divine expectation to illumine thee in return for every act of thankful homage thou dost render unto Him. Not one deed of thine that is good, or one word that is faithful, shall escape thy lips without being met in return with the outpourings of His favours. Thus, my soul, the more thou delightest in God's service, so much the more will the star of hope be brightened in thy midst. . . . Think not at any time, that the star shall *vanish*. To thy poor, imperfect gaze it may often *seem* to do so, for sin may cloud it over. But still it shall be there, and it will not long remain obscured. One breath of the

divine favour of thy Lord shall be all powerful to dispel the mists which thou hast created, and then in unsubdued brilliancy thou shalt again behold thy cherished light.

Par. 52.] How often hast thou placed thy hope in the fleeting enjoyments of this passing world, and imagined that thou couldst lay up for thyself a good foundation against the time to come, by increasing thy earthly prospects! And if thou hast carefully examined the consequences of thy false hope, in the fruit it bare to thee, thou hast found out how frequently what thou didst expect, came far short of thy expectation, and produced in thee the feeling of bitter disappointment. Canst thou not trace, in thy life, many such incidents and events, and picture to thyself the sad memories that they awaken, of the despair thou hast endured when thy false hopes proved themselves to be such? Truly they created in thee a temporary feeling of pleasure, and of ease, and thou wert glad to hide thy darkest thoughts behind the brightness of thy hope. Yet all too soon thou didst find how quickly they dissolved, and left thee even worse than when thou didst first begin to trust in them. . . . Then again, my soul, the recurrence of those many disappointments created within thee a *reaction* that did not please thee. When the full blown expectation burst, and left thee but an empty shell, thou wert easily provoked, and didst exhibit thine

anger in a manner that ran thee into greater sin. The failure of thy long cherished hope, was almost like a death blow to thee, and thou wert beginning to learn that there were other and more enduring strongholds for thy trust and confidence. And so, it may be, that even though thy earthly expectation were completely frustrated, thou still didst not desire to learn of *new* ones that were yet untried. . . . Wilt thou not know betimes, my soul, of the *only* stronghold of hope, in which it is *safe* for thee to confide? There is One in Whom thou mayest place the fulness of thy most secret and entire confidence, for He hath known thy need, and thy disappointment, and thy doubts, ever since thou wert capable of forming any one of them!

Par. 53.] Remember, O my soul, that thy present condition is one of *probation*. It is not yet allowed thee to unravel the mysteries of those sacred truths, and blessed visions, which are reserved for the rewards of the faithful in another, and a better life. Thine is, *for the present*, at least, the life of *Hope*. Until thou knowest *practically* something of the Dawning of Everlasting Day, and of the rising of the DAY STAR in thy heart, thou hast a time to spend in *waiting*. It is as though thy God had called thee to meet Him at His Palace, but had, as yet, only suffered thee to approach His *gates*. Thou hast attained unto a *measure* of thy blessedness, though the fulfilment of the benediction is not yet assigned unto thee.

Thou hast to remember that little word—**UNTIL!** There are some things which must come, and others that must go; there are lives and deaths around thee, and about thee, that must come and pass away; there are friends and foes, with whom thou shalt have to meet; and there is *time* to speed its course before thy God can let thee in, and tell that the period has come which *knows* no waiting. . . . Yet as in thy daily life thou often findest little reproductions of large things; little copies of beautiful pictures; little images of beautiful things; so too in thy spiritual existence thou shalt find that there will be continual representations unto thee of the great and solemn realities of *time* and of eternity. Thou wilt find that in the changing circumstances of thy life there will be little seasons of probation; little fulfilments of hope; and little representations of eternal light and day. . . . Yet whether thou art waiting, and watching for the coming of the lesser or greater meaning of “*until*,” thou art still within the dispensation of *hope*. Thy joys are not yet fulfilled; thy griefs are not yet at an end. And they shall not end, nor be fulfilled “*until* the day dawn, and the day star arise in thy heart.” O then be on the look out for that blessed time, that it take thee not unawares!

Par. 54.] Yet although it hath been appointed thee to *wait* for the end, and to be

patient in thy suspense, thou shouldest not conclude that on that account thou mayest have to wait until thy heart becometh sick of the task, and weary of the vigil. It *was* so in thy earthly hopes, and many a time thou didst faint in the way, as thou didst wait for their fulfilment. But now thy trust is in One Who will only keep thee so long as is *needful*, and Who in His love for thee, longs even *at once* to let thee have thy desire ! It is only because thou art not yet prepared to use it rightly, or because of other causes of which He doth not care to let thee know, that He withholdeth the coveted prize. His faithful martyrs longed that they might die, to prove the greatness of their love, and the ardour of their zeal, and yet He often did permit a time to pass, before they gained their end. Thou too mayest have begged for what thou neededst, that it might not be denied thee, —but thy Lord knew well the excellence of His reward for *hope* and so He hath withheld thee from the prize until thou mightest take it with the abundant *interest* He hath been pleased to add to thy patience. . . . And the more He trieth thee by this means, the more He maketh thee to love Him, and to kiss the rod by which He scourgeth thee. He increaseth in thee such bright revelations of the eternal Day, that He maketh thee even sometimes to forget the present, in the glory of the future. He pointeth thee in the direction whence thou mayest expect the DAY STAR to arise, and

there He leaveth thee, absorbed entirely by thy occupation. . . . Canst thou refuse the happy task of *watching* at His bidding? Thou shalt learn to love the hour of thy duty, when He setteth thee this task, and wilt improve in thy capacity of seeing by the expansion of thy powers, in thy anxiety to be the *first* to see the brilliant light and the gilding of the dark hills of time, by the bright sunshine of that Day!

Par. 55.] Art thou watching anxiously, O my soul, for spiritual benefit? Hast thou the burden of unconquered sin to bear? And doth it seem as though *nothing* would ever outbalance thy love for *it*? At times thou dost wholly rely upon thy God, and feel a comfort and blessing in His service; but at others thy sin doth hold thee captive and thou almost meetest, face to face, with thine enemy, the Devil, and although thou hatest the very outlines of his features, thou dost seem allured by his hideousness, and while in the very *Presence* of thy God, thou dost commit thyself again, and fallest! Then there is a message of Divine comfort and encouragement for thee. Thy struggle is severe, and thou mayest often fail in the keeping of thy resolutions, but upon thy true repentance and desire of amendment, thou wilt again have strength given unto thee! Hast thou sinned so grievously that thou darest hardly think it over? Remember that so long as sin hath power to conquer, CHRIST hath power to overcome!

Hath thy spirit become weak and vanquished? then remember it is because of thy *condition* here, and that it may not be otherwise *until* the dawning of the Day, and the rising of the Day Star in thy heart. . . . Therefore, my soul, "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Consider not thine own powers, but the powers of thy God, and thy *dependence* upon Him. He permitteth sin to overtake, and to *overcome* thee, because He willeth that thou shouldest remember that thou art not yet at rest, or perfected. He promiseth thee an entire and unending separation from thine enemies, by and bye, but the hour of thy peace is not *yet*. . . . Wilt thou not love to be frequently in the exercise of thy hope, seeing that *it* alone can cheer thee in thy sorrows? Thou mayest never be gloomy, and despairing, if thou wilt but claim the rewards of blessedness which never cease to flow from the *activity of hope*.

Par. 56.] And now, examine thyself as to the *past*. Thou wilt find many hours of thy life to have been spent in despair and desolation, as though there were no God to comfort thee, and no encouragement vouchsafed unto thee. And thou wilt often find, that in succession to such darkened hours, have come dark *deeds* of sin. The power of Satan hath exerted itself to make thee sad, and sin hath placed the cloud of doubtfulness between thee and God, and then thou hast withdrawn thy hand

from the leading of thy Lord, and gone wilfully away! O my soul, thou wilt never know the happiness there is in life, until thou hast learned to forget what *men* call happiness, and to learn what the excellent joys of *hope* may be to thee. If thou wilt but begin to learn what they are, thou wilt never cease to increase in them day by day. . . . *Hope* will open unto thee things as yet unheard of, and raise thy expectations, and encourage thy longings, until at last, it will prepare thee for what thou hast so long been looking. It will brighten all thy darkest days, with the promise of a fairer morrow; it will enable thee to bear the burden of thy worldly sorrows and thy earthly toils, with a patience thou didst not before think it was possible for thee ever to exhibit. It will make thee kind and gentle, to thy neighbour and thy friend, and forbearing with their faults. It will make thee *more like God!* . . . And thus it will keep thee in a frame of mind well pleasing unto Him in Whom thou hast *placed* thy hope. O blessed indeed wilt thou become by the influence of its sacred promise. Distant though the dawning of the Day of God may be, it will make thee to picture its amazing glory; and far though the DAY STAR may be from thy powers of vision, it will help thee to await, with devoutest gratitude and patience, and with continual praise, *until* it arise in thy heart, and until the dispensation of *hope* die out in the fulness of an unclouded and unending *reality*.

Meditation IX.

“HEAVENLY KNOWLEDGE.”

“*HE knew what was in man.*”—*S. John ii. 25.*

Par. 57.] Consider, O my soul, that when God formed thee, He knew better even than thou thyself couldst tell Him, everything that would concern thee. And taking this as the idea upon which thou hast to found thy present meditation, be led to the exercise of a deep and moving gratitude that He *condescended* to take notice of thee and of thy interests. Ever since the earliest remembrance that thou hast (and even *before* that) He hath been watching over thee for good, and ordering each event of thy life, and furthering the same to the interests of thy immortality, and the benefits of thy earthly existence. God could, and did, see through the whole history of thy life better far than thou canst ever recall the past days to thy memory ; He appointed, and watched over, the progress of thy growth and increase, and cared for thee as though none other lived beside thee. . . . But He now desires thee to carry out this idea

for thy spiritual edification, and to see that how by His almighty knowledge of the incidents of thy life *before they came to pass*, He hath established a good proof, even to *thy* feeble understanding, of His right to concern Himself with the fulfilment of His plans for thee; and also how that He hath no competitor in His Divine knowledge of what is *in* thee. Neither good nor evil may escape Him. He seeth and knoweth the *springs* of thy actions, and considereth the thoughts that *prompt* thy works. . . . Be amazed at the exceeding knowledge of thy God, and learn how that the remembrance of His omniscience should make thee continually watchful, lest thy life accord not with the purposes and intentions of God for thee, and lest He discover—what thou mayest even have been hiding from *thyself*—that there is in thee a spirit of wilfulness and disobedience to His commands, and a greater love and favour shown by thee to *thyself*, and to the world, than to Him.

Par. 58.] That JESUS might the better *prove* to thee, that He knew what was in thee, He condescended of his abundant pity and loving-kindness to take upon Himself thy *nature*. O, how the remembrance of this surpassing mystery, should move thee to a *desire* that all thy ways should be fashioned and made after His divine pattern and example! How scrupulous oughtest thou to become in the use of that

body, which—created in the image of God—was *re-created* by the life and death of thy Saviour! How earnestly shouldst thou offer up the devotion of thy faculties and powers, that they may become more than ever likened unto His! How deep should thy love, and thy tenderness become for Him, Who thus manifested forth His amazing love and tenderness for thee! He always knew full well all that He knoweth now, but because He remembered that thou wouldest have a better *proof* of His knowledge by His assumption of thy human frame and nature, He gave thee even what thou didst require! . . . And yet consider the most adorable and wondrous *humility* of thy Lord, that notwithstanding all His supreme knowledge, He lived on earth, subject to the many imputations of ignorance, Satanic influence, and blasphemy, which His enemies heaped upon Him. Yet when *thou* art contradicted, or *thy* word disputed, how doth thy imperfect knowledge assert its rights, and how angry dost thou become! And all the while He watcheth thee, knowing all that is in thee. . . . Wilt thou not learn to exercise thy humility then, as one of the first steps whereby thy soul is to be made like unto Him, Whose knowledge far exceeded all the wisdom of the people who surrounded Him. Resolve, that in all thy ways, thou wilt henceforth increase in meekness of mind, and forgetfulness of self, that thus thou mayest the better make

thyself like thy Master, Whom thou wouldest imitate.

Par. 59.] Then mark the difference in the *effects* of the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of man. In the latter case, thou mayest often perceive the evidence of deep thought and research, but after all, thou wilt discover, that it cannot penetrate beyond the *outer* circumstances of life, and the material universe. Whereas, the knowledge that thou mayest obtain from God, will instruct thee more especially in the *inner* and hidden revelations of thyself. If, in the case of the *Master* it revealed, what—to others,—appeared so hidden; then in thy own case, (the case of the servant), thou wilt find that it will light up what before was dark and dim. By the bright shining of this spiritual knowledge, thou shalt be able to discern what is *in* thee! . . . Strive then, O my soul, for more of this illumination, that thou mayest be enabled to learn more of thyself. There is hardly anything of which thou knowest *less* than of thyself. Thou hast found it a hard task to learn about thyself, and there were many difficulties in thy way. It was easy enough for thee to prescribe to others, and to point out the defects of their lives, but even though, sometimes, thy own failings *did* become visible to thee, it still was hard for thee to mend them, because thou didst not easily observe the benefit that thou wouldest thereby gain. Thou

didst lack knowledge, and didst not "ask of Gon," that it might be given unto thee. . . . So thou hast been content with the education of thy *mind*: thou hast considered it of primary importance that thou shouldst have no lack of *science*; and in the search for this thou hast not cared to remember, that there is a knowledge *more* excellent than it, and a wisdom which by its Divine origin, would enable thee to know, what was affecting or disaffecting thy *relationship with God*!

Par. 60.] Then *search* for that wisdom and knowledge. Thou wilt find it abundantly in the imitation of thy Lord's life and conversation; thou wilt find it too in the constant communication of His Divine presence unto thee, especially in the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Communion. But remember, my soul, that the search may not immediately *end*. It may be for a length of time. Thou mayest, perchance, have many failures in thy search, and look long for the blessing until thy heart begin to fail thee. Yet, even as thou searchest, and as thou meetest each disappointment, thou wilt find that thou art *being* instructed, and art enlarging thy store of knowledge by thy very trials and oppressions. It may be that thy God seeth this to be the best way of teaching thee: therefore strive not to change the *method* He hath adopted, but use it in patience, and *wait* for the fulness of the benediction until the times

also are fulfilled. . . . Search again, my soul, for the inmost revelation of GOD unto thee in the treatment which *others* have to endure. Thou wilt see many of thy fellows, who seek with equal earnestness for the same gift, oftentimes rewarded in most *unexpected* ways. So, too, thou mayest, likewise find thyself in the receipt of the favour thou cravest, but by means which, in thy ignorance, thou wouldest never have imagined to be likely ones. Learn from this consideration, to consecrate *each* event of thy life, by watchfulness as to GOD's share in it, and to seek for knowledge, by observing the results of *His* knowledge in the manner He ordereth thy circumstances. . . . And be careful, lest thou neglect to cherish in thy *memory*, the course of God's teaching. Thou art now, my soul, under His divine instruction, and the *manner* in which thou learnest, will show itself when thou art examined hereafter. O that thou mightest be more diligent, and more thoroughly devoted to thy labours, knowing that thou mayest so *greatly* benefit thyself.

Par. 61.] With the return of each day, and the mercies that fall upon thee in such large measure, thou wilt find increased desire, to show thy gratitude in the more close *union* of thyself with thy Lord. Wilt thou not, therefore, reverently seek to find communion with Him, by the expression of thy wants, and thy failings, that He may, as it were, check the same with

His own estimate of thy requirements, and thus assure thee, of His intimate knowledge of all that concerns thee? He loveth so to speak unto thee, and for thee to find out wherein there is *agreement* between Himself and thee. He *needeth not*, that any testimony should be borne of thy wants, for He *knoweth* them all, but He *desireth* thee to tell Him, for thy *own* comfort and consolation. . . . But remember, O my soul, that even when thou art so far weaned from God, as to care nothing about this sweet communion with Him, that even *then* He forgetteth not thy sorrows or thy woes. To Him all things are plain, seeing that nothing *can* escape Him! How solemn then should the thought be to thee, that by the knowledge which the Lord posseseth of thy inner life, He will call thee into judgment! Thou mayest imagine sin to be in no need of forgiveness when it has been forgotten by thee; but *He* can never forget it, except *only* upon thy true repentance. Thou mayest, also, imagine that some of thy *good* deeds may be allowed to escape His notice? Nay, not *one*! They shall all likewise be stored up before Him, and He will repay thee, as He saw the *motives* by which thou wert moved, to their commission. . . . And if the *motives* are to be so much considered, shall there be no cause for thee to fear, lest even thy *best* deeds, should have a savour of sin, and wither before His searching Eye, Who knoweth not *only* the result, (as the world doth),

but Who, in His tremendous and powerful knowledge, knoweth also what is the *prompting cause in man*.

Par. 62.] Furthermore consider, O my soul, that thy Lord knoweth what fruit is to be found in thee, as a consequence of the outpouring of His Spirit, and of His grace. Thy natural imperfections shall *not* be the only things by which He shall prove His perfect knowledge, He shall make thee to remember, how it was of *His* gift, that thou didst have even the *desire* for a better life. He will not forget, that He hath *helped thee*, with the bestowal of His talents, and that He requireth an account. He will remind thee, of the continual outpourings of His love, whereby He filled thee with Himself. How frequently hath the HOLY GHOST urged thee, in the silent whispers of His yearning love, to devote thyself to thy profession of holiness, and not to suffer the world to hold thee any longer in derision, because of thy faintheartedness! How frequently too, hath the remembrance of the good thoughts that were inspired in thee, (but which, so often, have been allowed to fail,) sprung up within thee, to tell thee of thy need of very earnest, and sincere renewal? . . . And, if these things be so, and thou hast had constant *reminders* of the responsibility under which thou actest in thy life, hast thou thereby been helped to exhibit the fruits of thy heavenly knowledge, by a wise

use of these voices, and by a frequent search for opportunities of expressing thy sense of dependence and gratitude? Where canst thou notice, the footprints of the enemy, *pursued by thine*? And where canst thou *not* see thy footsteps *pursued by the enemy*? And all because of lack of knowledge! . . . Be saddened by the reflections which this meditation indirectly brings to thee, and endeavour thy utmost, to learn more about the course of thy life, and the connection that it hath, with that of thy Lord's. Examine deeply, by the light of the knowledge of God, the track that thou art leaving behind thee, as thou journeyest on, and ask whither it is likely to lead thee, and to lead those who obey thy example. And confess before God, that the frequent assertions of thy wisdom would not bear the scrutiny of His Eye, nor influence for good thy efforts to attain to the knowledge of God.

Par. 63.] Realize next, that God's knowledge of what is *in* thee, leads Him to expect thee to make use of it for the benefit of thy fellow pilgrims. If thou hast any one virtue, or grace, which stands out more prominently than another, it is *that* which thy Lord is pointing out to thee for thy employment in His service. He hath placed thee in thy present circumstances of life, and hath surrounded thee by opportunities of doing good. If thou hast freely received, thou must also freely give. Think not that thy graces and gifts are thine

alone! They are thy *neighbour's* just as much, and He who seeth into thy secret self, knoweth of their existence. Beware, my soul, of hoarding up the good gifts of God, which He watcheth over, and desireth thee to *use*. . . . Resolve, that in remembrance of the stupendous love of thy Lord to thee, in making a union so complete and perfect, between Himself and thee, that thou wilt continually increase in thy affection for Him, and in the use of all the blessed means which He hath given thee as helps. And that, in gratitude for His most perfect knowledge of thee thou wilt seek for a greater knowledge of thyself, so that thou mayest become like unto Him. And, if thou art sometimes disappointed, in the attainment of this gift, that thou wilt not faint, but *still* pursue it, and learn, *in thy very disappointments*, to find it! . . . Determine also, O my soul, that thou wilt compare thy present life, with the standard that thy Lord hath set before thee in His, and that thou wilt strive to bring it into greater and closer union and contact with thy pattern. Thy account hereafter, shall be not only for thy natural deeds, but also for the frequent scorning of those gifts which are *in* thee, by the outpouring of the HOLY GHOST. Then, be led to the determination, that *nothing* shall ever make thee neglect the good gifts of God's love, but that in the increase of thy knowledge of Him, and of thyself, thou wilt find a certainty and security unto which, hitherto, thou hast been but a stranger.

Meditation X.

"LIGHT IN DARKNESS."

"Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet; and a light unto my path."—Psalm cxix. 105.

Par. 64.] Doth it not seem a strange thing to thee, my soul, that notwithstanding the very many and frequent opportunities thou hast had of studying the Bible, thou hast so much neglected it. It hath been thy boast that the Word of God was free and open to all, but thou thyself hast abused that freedom by practically despising it, *because* it was so common and so cheap! Is it wonderful then, that thou hast often gone wrong, and followed thy own imaginations, in preference to the mind and will of God? Canst thou *doubt* as to the reason that thou hast so often been in perplexity and fear, and hast not known thy path? Thou hast not taken unto thee the light that was provided, and so thou hast fallen in the dark and unknown way by which thou didst travel. Are not these things so? Is it not well that thou shouldest meditate upon the past, and discover

thy failings therein? . . . Thou knowest by experience that directly a thing becometh common, it is little esteemed. And so thou hast to lament that the very blessing which God hath given thee in an open Bible, hath so often been despised by thee. Thou hast not taken the trouble to become a *searcher* after truth, when thou didst imagine it was already sufficiently revealed; and so thou didst forget how that its open revelation was *only for those who desired to be enlightened by it*, and that to those—who like thyself—were content with the *fact*, without the practice of consequent duties, the blessings of a free Bible might be turned into a curse! . . . Well had it been for thee that thou shouldest *never have heard* the Word of Truth, rather than *having* heard it, thou shouldest not fulfil it by thy obedience. Wilt thou not, therefore, strive to be careful in thy *future* study of the Holy Scriptures, knowing that they are, indeed, *profitable* for thee, as a man of God, in the exercise of thy many duties and relationships of life? And to that end study diligently the description that is here given to thee by the Psalmist, who was so much more grateful for the *little* part of the Bible which he possessed, than *thou* art, who hast the *full* and *completed* Book!

Par. 65] In the first place, consider the *darkness* of thy path. Unenlightened by the Divine rays, thou hast had to grope about in unutterable gloom. Thy sins, thy failings,

and thy wilfulness have shut out the last beam of a brightness that might have enveloped thee if thou hadst not turned against it. But now, the plaint of the ancient prophet is thine, and thou hast discovered the effects of thine iniquities in the gross darkness that hath covered thy spiritual self. And greatly hath this gloom been deepened by the presence of thy fellow-sinners, who, like thyself, were resolved not to ask for a light which could show them their evil deeds!

. . . With becoming consistency thou hast often permitted this natural darkness to induce a spirit of slumber, and the more thou hast put out the light, so much the more hast thou been inclined to sink into an indifferent state, a carelessness as to thy conduct. "They that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night," saith the Apostle. And how true it is that thou hast given way to the darkness of thy unscriptural life for the indulgence of an apathetic sleep in regard to God, and a vicious thirsting after the satisfaction of the earthly drink of pleasure.

. . . O then, my soul, be awakened by the bright shining of the Holy Word of God that is already casting its rays about thee, and remember thy vocation and thy responsibility. Consider how dreadful thy doom would be, if thou wert overtaken *in the darkness*, by thy Master and thy Judge. He hath said that He will approach unexpectedly and take thee by surprise, and therefore thou shouldst be on the watch.

If he, who had not on a wedding garment, was rejected from the marriage feast and cast into outer darkness, shalt not thou also be spurned from the presence of the Bridegroom, (who expecteth thee to walk in His light), if, instead thereof, thou hast preferred to dwell in darkness?

Par. 66.] To extricate thyself from the terrors of a most just sentence of condemnation, thy Lord hath given thee the means of illuminating thy natural darkness, and the gloom that surrounds thy ignorance, by the LANTERN which He hath put into thy hands at the beginning of thy journey through this life. Unlike in *some* respects to an earthly lantern, yet alike in many others, it gives thee a light which surpasseth thy best description, and yet is not too dazzling for thy weakened sight to bear. Strive to learn about it, and to discover how the Bible answereth to the description. Imagine thyself the servant of an *earthly* master, who hath bidden thee go forth upon an errand on a dark and stormy night. Thou preparest thyself for the journey through the country lanes and roads, and when thou art ready, dost present thyself to him, that thou mayest be commissioned. After that he hath told thee thy message and thy work, he placeth a *lantern* in thy hands that thou mayest be helped in the execution of thy task. And so, my soul, thy Lord hath called thee, it may be at a most unseasonable time for

thee, and hath given thee a work to perform, and hath placed the LANTERN of His Holy Word in thy hands, that it may enable thee the better to fulfil thy mission. . . . Then there is the setting forth, with the *outfit* of God, upon thy path. Steadily thou fighest thy way against wind and rain (against evil influence, and Satan's discouragements), and firmly dost thou place thy feet upon the road until thou dost notice that it becometh dangerous and difficult to tread. *Then* the Lantern is lowered by thy hand and becometh a guide to thee in the steps thou takest, enabling thee to *choose thy road*, and avoid all the unclean and dangerous spots. . . . O how thou dost bless thy Master *then*, for, though at first, thou didst not know thy need of what He gave thee, because the road was so familiar, yet how gladly dost thou use it now, knowing its power to direct thee, and to keep thy feet so that they "should not slip."

Par. 67.] And yet thou mayest ask—*"Wherein* is the Bible like a Lantern?" Thank God, my soul, for making comparisons so easily to be comprehended. Examine the construction of an ordinary thing like this, and be amazed at the lessons that it bringeth unto thee. See how that there is a light in it surrounded by transparent substance, such as glass or horn, and supported by a frame of metal, and *learn* that in the BIBLE, the ever blessed light of the Holy Spirit shineth through the external letter,

as the candle doth within the lantern ; and how the flame can *never be extinguished* by the gusts of wind which Satan raiseth in the minds and by the words of unbelievers. They may howl in their anger and despair, but still the light burneth brightly, and none may blow it out ! And doth not the material (which, while it *protecteth* also *revealeth* the light) suggest a lesson to thee ? Canst thou not learn herein of thy inability to gaze without *faith* at God, by which virtue alone thou canst approach *within a certain distance* of Him, and see Him in His works, "as through a glass darkly," in comparison with the brightness that remaineth to be revealed. Or shall not the transparent horn, through which the light *can* come, but without revealing the *source*, remind thee of HIM, Who is revealed to thee by the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST, as the "Horn of thy Salvation ? And then, my soul, be instructed by the very *framework* of the Lantern, and learn that therein thou hast a picture of the *Truth* of God, which establisheth and maintaineth everything else ; and confirmeth all that thou hast learned of the other parts and lessons comprised in this simple type. The Bible is encircled (like the Lantern) by the Truth of God. It is *that* which maketh the framework of its wondrous pages, and enableth us to discover what is meant to be for our instruction and for the increase of our heart's faith and love.

Par. 68.] Proceed in thy meditation, to the *other* illustration of which God hath been pleased to give thee as to the Bible. Not only is it intended to be a Lantern to the feet—impervious to wind and rain—but it is likewise to become to all its faithful and prayerful students, “a LIGHT unto their paths.” Conjure up the former picture of thy journey; it may be that through the darkness of the night, thou art unable to retrace thy way, and, halting before the finger-post, thou desirest to enquire. But it is dark, and thou canst not see the names. Then thou *liftest up* the light from thy feet, and throwing the reflection upwards, thou art no longer in doubt, and canst pursue the *right* path. My soul, hath this never been the case with thee, in thy spiritual journey? Too often hast thou gone on for a time, satisfied, to a certain degree, with thy progress, until a difficulty hath presented itself; two distinct roads were before thee, and to *thy fancy* both appeared right. Then thou hast sought for instruction, and whilst thou wert in prayer, thou didst throw the light of the Bible upon thy course, and by it thou didst receive the illuminating instruction thou wert needing! And sometimes thy journey was by *unknown* roads. Thou hadst never gone that way before, and the former experiences of thy friends were not much use to thee. Hast thou not discovered how blessed at such a time was the LIGHT which thy God had given thee? For it was a clear and shining one, that never

became dim. Sometimes thou didst borrow the light of thy neighbours' advice and counsel, but it never lasted thee like *this*—it ever burnt itself out, and became useless and burdensome. . . . In the *changeless* brilliancy of the Divine illumination thou couldest alone find help. Thou wert constrained to follow up the Psalmist's praise, in thy own case, and to exclaim with the tenderest and most honest feelings thou didst possess, that "the testimonies of God were exceeding righteous and true," and that they had become to thee the "very joy of thy heart."

Par. 69.] Then my soul, seeing the exceeding importance of this *Light*, because of thy own *darkness*, thou needest to learn at once, how thou mayest the better attain unto it. And forget not the blessedness that must accrue to thee from so manifest a desire, for thou canst not *keep* this Light hidden. It *will* show itself, and thus thou wilt be lighting many a more ignorant soul than thyself, even though thou mayest never know it. Thou mayest *immediately* commence thy search for an escape from darkness, with the full assurance that it will be rewarded by the discovery of the treasure. It may seem to thee that thy past neglect of the Bible hath made but little difference, and in thy pride thou mayest imagine that thou art as good as those whose lives are continually spent in its study. *Words* will never prove this to be wrong, therefore *act*. If thou wouldest give a practical refutation to

this objection, *begin at once*, TO READ THE WORD OF GOD! And how wilt thou commence? Thou needest not be in a hurry to *read the Bible through*! Better far for thee to take but a little portion,—though a *fixed* one,—every day, just when thou hast the most *time* and the greatest *solitude*. Thou wilt find it uninteresting if thou dost not carefully remember that it is God's *message*, God's *letter* to thee. Seek, therefore, the help of some good book of *explanation*, that thou mayest not build up doctrines or fancies of thy own, but mayest delight thyself in that better nourishment which hath been prepared by wiser and holier souls than thine. And then, wait with gentle patience for the voice of thy LORD. It is the work of the HOLY GHOST to instruct thee and send home the truths to thee, and to effect a growth of holiness and zeal in thee. Sow thou diligently, O my soul, the Divine Word, and look anxiously for the fruition. It may be *long* in coming, but, by-and-bye the night of waiting will have gone, and the glorious Light of Heavenly Truth will reveal to thee the harvest of thy labours.

Par. 70.] May the *easiness* of the fulfilment of this duty which thou hast now learned, not prevent thee from carrying it out. Thou wilt have many new dangers and difficulties to fight against, if thou art determined to come out of darkness into light. And among them thou wilt, perhaps, principally be tried by the differ-

ences that seem to exist in the interpretation of particular texts. Hence thou wilt at times be inclined to imagine the study of the Bible only a *hindrance*, and a cause of increased *darkness*, rather than light. Yet suffer not such fancies to *remain* within thee. They will come as the temptations of the devil, and cause thee to desist, therefore let them make thee all the more *anxious to read more!* . . . And when thou art thus tried, wilt thou not rejoice, my soul, in the knowledge that thy God hath appointed an *interpreter* of the Bible. If thou wilt listen to this divinely appointed Revealer of Scripture, thou needest never fear that thou wilt be left in error, or in darkness. But even as thou mayest hold a lantern and *yet* be in darkness if the shade be drawn, so, without the *Holy Church*, thou mayest also hold the Bible in thine hand and be still in *utter* darkness. But with her help, thy understanding will be illuminated as by a flood of light! . . . Resolve then, O my soul, to be a more earnest and constant student of that Holy Book. Let it be to thee a gem without price, containing the message of God to THEE, and being as a "Lantern to thy feet, and a Light unto thy path," even unto the end of thy days, and *in* the end. Pray to God that He would help thee continually by His grace and succour, that thou mayest relish the study, and love the contemplation of His Word in an ever increasing degree, so that it may be unto thee as a light that shineth "more and more unto the perfect day."

Meditation XI.

"THE TILLING OF THE SOUL."

"*He that tilleth the land shall have plenty of bread.*"—
Proverbs xxviii. 19.

Par. 71.] When thou dost consider, O my soul, the succession in the natural world, of cause and effect; or the recurrence of the seasons; the change from day to night; or from youth to age, thou art carried on to the verge of another consideration which affects thy *spiritual* existence. Thou hast often had it pointed out to thee that in the good providence of God the curses of thy life have been turned into blessings, and thus thou hast learned to know something of that important truth which the words of thy meditation teach thee. In the present condition of thy life, God doth vouchsafe to use very *natural* circumstances to bring about the highest ends, and if thou wouldest desire to know *how* thou mayest *avert* for thyself the "evil," and *induce* the presence of "good," then thou needest to realize the importance of this *self culture*, under

the direction and blessing of the Holy Spirit. . . . Thou art even as the earth on which thou treadest, — capable either of producing large results (of good or evil, according to the quality of the seed thou sowest); or, equally capable of remaining *useless*. And from the analogy of nature thou hast to learn, that as effect followeth cause in respect to the tilling of the land, so too will it follow in the tilling of the ground of the soul. And the blessing is attached to one as much as the other, so that thou mayest not work without the sure promise of favourable results. . . . Then let this thought be thine to-day, and strive so to begin thy spiritual culture that thou mayest live in hope of speedy and real fruitfulness. Thou wilt find a reward especially thine own in the fulfilment of this duty, and be overpowered with gratitude, as thou seest the *result*, and watchest day by day for the springing up of the seed which thou hast sown; and for the growth unto perfection of that which is already arriving out of the hitherto dark surface of thy untilled and uncultivated ground.

Par. 72.] Be constrained to consider how God hath turned thy curse into a blessing. Was it not said in the beginning that, as a *punishment* for sin, “man should eat bread in the sweat of his brow,” and should “till the ground from whence he came?” Yet observe how wonderfully rich in hopefulness and in mercy

that judgment became ! After the *labour* was completed, and the *hard* work finished, the *harvest* followed. It was as though God would remind His creatures that this bondage was not to last, though it were necessary for a season. Like the bow in the cloud, this blessedness came together with a voice of comfort, and of peace, and turned the very curse through disobedience into the means of bringing about the benediction on renewed obedience ! Be astonished at the marvellous gifts of God ! . . . How well it is for thee that thou mayest not therefore limit the promises of God to thy secret life, but extend their meaning to the concerns of thy soul. And herein thou wilt further observe that as the labour of tilling the ground became a punishment for disobedience as to the *fruits* of the earth, so the hardships of thy present religious probation and toil, are given thee as punishments for the consumption of the good fruit of the soul, by the evil appetites of the Devil that induced thee to despise them. Yet in both cases again observe the Divine power exerted to bring good out of evil. In the case of thy forefathers, the "tilling" should bring forth "plenty of bread," and in thy own case the "culture" of true religion will fill thee with the food that satisfieth unto everlasting life. . . . Seeing the blessedness that is thus held out to thee, as the reward of thy patient toil, do thou yearn more and more to become a good husbandman of thy eternal

interests. And set thyself to the consideration of the means whereby thou mayest "till" thy ground, not resisting that which may cause thee pain, or adopting an exceeding quantity of that which pleaseth thee most, but honestly fulfilling thy labour, as thou wouldest have to work for the results of earth.

Par. 73.] As to the *manner* in which the "tilling" is to be accomplished. Picture thy ground hard and stony, and hitherto uncultivated. If thou seest here and there a little piece of more fertile soil, attribute it to none of thy *own* endeavours, but to the gift of God, and give Him the thanks. Thou art thyself like the cold, dark, barren land, open indeed to the rain and sunshine, capable of maturing the grain, but *of thyself* fruitless. Again thou art like the fields that thou beholdest around, in that thou hast likewise to be cut and wounded and the hidden parts of thyself to be disclosed, by the plough of God's Word, or of time, or sorrow. Until the green blade of vegetation shall enlighten thee, thou art dark and heavy to look upon, but when it springeth up it brighteneth thy whole surface and filleth thee with hope and joy. . . . Grieve not then, my soul, when thou dost discover the *hardness* of thy work. It will be no *pleasant* thing for thee at first to tear up the ties of thy heart, and to discover the hidden evils which caused thee to be fruitless. For *this* thou must be prepared.

Nor canst thou be surprised if the pain should seem even *more* acute than thou didst expect it to be. This may be because of thy own weakness, or because of the struggle and the depth of the evil that is in thee. Through all the suffering, do thou keep looking unto the end and waiting for the fruitfulness to arrive. . . . And after that thy inherent evil hath been subdued, and thou art ready to receive the seed of God, it will be given unto thee. But lest thy evil influences should return and eradicate thy purposes of amendment, thou wilt again be subject to a tribulation of pain, in the rolling and harrowing of thy ground that the good seed may be protected from the winds and rains, and from the birds. Thus, my soul, thou shalt find the hardness of the curse to be *very* hard at first, though when the first pain is passed thou wilt acknowledge that the bitterness of the death of sin is gone !

Par. 74.] Then as to the *season*. Thou mayest not be ready for the work to begin. God may see that it is good for thee that thou become harder still, so that thy change may astonish thy gratitude into greater action. Or He may discover in thee what thou never knewest of thyself—that there are certain things which would co-operate more strongly for thy good, at a later date than the *present* circumstances of thy life. “To everything there is a time,” and if thou dost wonder *why* God

did not arouse thee sooner, thou mayest well remember that "His hour had not yet come," But hath it not come to thee now? Stay and ponder well before thou dost venture to reply! . . . The "tilling" must be the work of the Husbandman who *understands* it. True, that thou hast a great deal to do thyself, but He must direct thee in thy labour. And He hath therefore done so through the "steward" whom He hath appointed for the work, even thy dear Lord Himself. He watcheth unceasingly for its progress, and longeth to impart His friendship, and His company, while thou art journeying on, and seeketh occasion to help thee. It is hard that thou carest so little for His powerful aid! Hast thou never felt a loneliness in thy labour? and desired that thou mightest have One in Whom to confide thy difficulties? Surely thou hast been wilfully blind to the friendliness of Him Who came to do His Father's work in the salvation of souls, such as thine, that were in bondage. . . . Thou knowest the value of sympathy and the soothing influence it imparteth to the wearied mind and heart. Then learn of the mighty influence and assistance which the sympathy of Jesus must impart. He hath known thy sorrow, and carried thy grief in His own most sacred Body of old, and hath proved to thee that He knoweth thy difficulties *practically*, by taking thy form and thy sorrows into His earthly life. O trust Him then my

soul, unreservedly, and know that He will help thee at every step of thy life. If then the season of *thy* trial be at hand, be brave in the strength which He will bestow.

Par. 75.] Then, my soul, there cometh a time of *waiting*, in which thou wilt need to exercise all thy patience. Thou wilt need abundant *faith* at the same time to know that although there *seemeth* no difference in thee, that yet the seed *is* sown, and *must* bring forth fruit in time. Thou wilt have to trust unhesitatingly in thy God for the increase. He will water thee with His heavenly dew, and cause the brightness of His sun to shine upon thee, and thus will cause thy fruitfulness. But it will take *time*: it will *not* be done at once. And for this thou needest to be prepared and assured. Then with what wilt thou occupy the time of thy expectation? Surely in the watchful care of the ground which thou hast tilled, and in the exercise of a spiritual hope, knowing that as thou hast sown so also must thou reap. Thus kindling thy patience afresh every day thou wilt be teaching thyself how to wait upon thy God for His blessing. . . . And in this time of waiting there will be temptation unto which thou hast hitherto been a stranger. The wicked angels, like birds of the air, shall exercise their powers of evil, and strive to dig up and to consume the scattered seed of God. They will make thee often think that *one* grain is of no consequence.

and that by its consumption thou wilt not be impoverished. O my soul *beware* of the *beginnings* of evil. Thou art not strong enough as yet to gaze at thy old sin without a longing to return to it, and thy strength lieth in thy flight from the very *approach* of sin. Like the watcher in the fields at spring time, thou wilt have to lift up thy voice and *cry*, when thou seest the evil birds approach. . . . But in a little while this first danger will be past, and thou wilt begin to loathe and hate the sin that held thee captive for so long. That will be because the seed is already springing up, and thou mayest rejoice in hope because of the progress that thou art making. Yet be not dismayed if perhaps thy toil is not over still, and if while all thy yearnings are green and tender, God try them by the heavy roll of persecution or of trial. Let this not take thee unawares.

Par. 76.] In all things keep looking unto the *end*. If thou wert satisfied with the labour of *tilling* alone, thou shouldest not possess the joy that cometh in the thought of "plenty of bread," as the result of thy work. O soul of mine, if sometimes thou hast *grudged* the hour of thy service, and hast been inclined to shirk thy toil, *think of the end!* All the reward of thy activity is comprehended in the blessing that is attached. In all thy earthly concerns it is "plenty" that is the source of thy happiness; then how much more shall the meaning

of that word be enlarged when it concerneth thy *eternity*. Hast thou tilled thy spiritual land? Then thou shalt have *plenty* of heavenly sustenance! Think of the grace and the happiness that is conveyed to thee in these words. Before thou wert hungry and weary: *then* thou shalt possess all that can give thee pleasure and delight, and moreover of these thou shalt have no lack. Abundantly hast thou wrought thy work, and abundantly shalt thou receive thy reward. . . . And consider the sweet analogy again that is pictured to thee here. As the result of earthly tilling thou hast plenty of that which is the *staff* of life. In the matter of the heavenly tilling thou shalt also possess the fulness of that which is thy *spiritual* staff. In one case the bread of earth; in the other the BREAD of LIFE. By this "plenty" is represented unto thee the entire *satisfaction* of the soul that has been educated by the various trials and adventures that belong to an honest and thorough "tilling." It is a *rest* to the weary that shall know *no* break; a reclining of the aching limbs, after a long, long walk; and a gift of "bread enough and to spare" for the satisfaction of a great and grievous hunger. . . . Then, my soul, hast thou a doubt, as to the real character and *name* of this reward, and this benediction? The Name is One thou hast so often heard, of One Who Himself hath trod the winepress of the wrath of God, and

hath borne the ploughing of the long furrows upon His sacred Flesh, that He might give thee as thy reward for following His steps, nothing less than the blessed revelation of Himself, of JESUS, the Saviour of His people from their sins.

Par. 77.] And now, my soul, after that thou hast followed out the blessed teaching of the Divine Word of God, and hast assured thyself of the necessity of a hard toil to attain so great a reward ; of a long and tedious battle to gain so lasting and joyful a crown, suffer not thyself to pass again into the world without forming some abiding resolutions as to thy future life before God and man. In the remembrance of the great promises of Divine love, and in the exercise of a boundless faith, as well as in the hope of a glorious future, as the harvest of the earthly seed time, do thou pray for wisdom that thou mayest begin afresh to fulfil thy important work of "tilling," which hath been so long neglected. Yea, my soul, thou hast indeed *no time* to lose in carrying thy efforts into force. The springtime may be already far advanced, and it may be getting late, and the brightness of the summer sun may help thee to forget thy *duty* in thy *pleasure*. Up then and seize the opportunity that remaineth unto thee, and prepare thy land, though it be in the "sweat of thy brow." And thou needest not to have it pointed out to thee how this

is to be accomplished. Thy sins and thy selfish affections are to be ploughed up, and destroyed. Thy customs, and manners, and words, and fashions, are to be uprooted, and killed. So shall the ground be ready for a new and better crop, and so shall it welcome the divine truths of God. If thou dost permit the summer sun to shine upon thee before this work is done, it will harden the ground, and prevent the growth; but if thy work is done, thou shalt find pleasure in those genial rays which shall make thee hopeful as to the growth of good within thee. . . . But while thou hast no result, and thy religion seem empty and unproductive unto thee, remember the heavenly Sower is watching the hidden increase of the seed. "Be patient therefore unto the coming of the LORD," and if thou canst not even *feel* or *see* "results," yet lift up thy heart in thy work, and *continue* thy tilling, knowing the promise that if thou doest this, thou shalt have "*plenty* of bread."



Meditation XII.

THE RENEWAL OF DIVINE STRENGTH.

"They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with eagle's wings ; they shall run and not be weary ; they shall walk and not faint."—
Isaiah xl. 31.

Par. 78.] If thou wouldest know thyself as God Almighty knoweth thee, thou needest to remember the conditions and circumstances of thy creation and of thy life. When thou wert sent into the world, thou wert mercifully endowed with an *outfit* to suit all thy needs. Thou wert provided with necessary safeguards against the storms and tempests that should await thee, and chief among these safeguards was the **STRENGTH** which, as part of thy humanity, was to be so useful and necessary to thee in thy struggles. Bless God, then, O my soul, because that He helped thee with this Divine gift, to prevent thee from being overcome by the trials that might oppress thee. . . . Yet learn the solemn truth that there has been a power exerting itself against this "strength"

wherewith thou wert equipped. How often hast thou discovered that thy strength had left thee, and how often in consequence thereof hast thou been unable to continue the battle and the toil? Thou needest no *proof* that these things are true, for thou hast experienced, and perhaps even now art still experiencing the full force of this fact, in the weakened resolutions and practices of thy life. Enquire diligently with thyself how far thy *present* strength would carry thee in the battle. . . . Thou canst not long remain in doubt as to the *cause* of thy weakness. It is SIN! That evil power hath captured thee, and by its enticing pleasures hath drawn thee into the snare that was only too powerful for thee to resist. Thou hast enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a season, and the reaction hath set in, reminding thee how it hath robbed thee of all that in which thou didst formerly love to excel, even of that vigorous power of strength which was a part of the outfit granted thee by thy GOD.

Par. 79.] Consider seriously whether there is no remaining opportunity of escape or of renewal. Canst thou find either in the earth? Thou mayest search long enough, and roam the wide world o'er, yet shalt thou return from thy journey with disappointment and dismay, crying out, "It is not there." Perhaps thou hast already done so? Perhaps thou hast felt the weariness of a vain and useless adventure, and

art displeased at the remembrance? Then, my soul, be thou fully convinced of the vanity of thy hopes of finding renewal of a Divine gift by any earthly means, and learn with ready love the lesson GOD would teach thee now. . . . As surely as sin hath weakened thy power, so surely can CHRIST thy Redeemer *renew* thy strength. O blessed truth to learn and value every hour: the old energy and dauntless vigour of bye-gone days of happier memory in thy earlier life may be re-awakened, and thou mayest once again enjoy the blessedness of that power which used *then* to enable thee to exercise the efforts of thy heart in ready acts of religious love and duty! There is a chance, and an opportunity—the fulfilment of which rests *only* upon thee—for the most perfect renewal of the Divine strength of GOD thy Maker, and thy Saviour. . . . It is the office of thy Redeemer to replenish thee with His own energy of mind and spirit, by the continued inspiration of that blessed Comforter, Whom He promised to His Church. This strength that thou needest may then be imparted most freely and generously unto thee, upon the conditions thou hast now to consider. It is too great a gift to be cast unreservedly upon all, yet there is every hope that thou mayest gain it for thyself, my soul, if thou wilt learn the practice of obedience to the method GOD hath shown them for its acquisition.

Par. 80.] The condition for thy renewal to thy primitive strength of innocence and faith, is declared unto thee so plainly that thou canst not possibly fail to comprehend its meaning. "They that *wait* upon the LORD shall renew their strength." And as thou art continually bidden to remain upon the watch-tower of thyself, it will be but the expanding of an *old* duty which will bring this renewal. Until now, thou mayest have watched without due regard to the near presence of God, which thou didst fail to *see*. Then now thou wilt remain steadfast at the same post, but wilt wait (in the conduct and rule of thy life) upon Him for Whose revelation thou dost long, but Whose unseen presence thou hast learned to recognise beside thee. . . . Thou wilt wait, O my soul, in the spirit of patience. Tarry He long or short, He will not deny thee His help during thy probation. Thou wilt learn to love the duty of watching, because of the holy inspirations He will grant thee, as He seeth thee awaiting His pleasure. All unseen thou wilt have Him at thy side, to keep watch with thee until His hour shall arrive. And as thou dost *wait*, He will strengthen thee by His consolations, filling thee with joy and gladness of heart, and thou shalt easily discover the source of all thy power to be Himself! . . . In dependence upon Him, thou shalt likewise continue at thy post, knowing from the gifts thou hast already had, that He is worthy upon Whom thou dost wait. Thou wilt

be content to follow Him in His humility and condescension, and *serve* Him in thy *waiting*. And the future will become illumined by the hope of the approach of that time when thy strength shall *need* no renewal, but be powerful for ever in the efforts of praise and adoration, which, with all thy new-gained strength, thou wilt offer up to Him upon Whom thou hast waited for thy renewal.

Par. 81.] And now, my soul, since thou hast undertaken to meditate upon the condition necessary to thy renewal, thou hast doubtless increased thy *desire* to gain this strength. For the more that thou dost contemplate so Divine a gift, so much the more thy longings will increase thereafter. It is well for thee, then, to learn that one condition of thy "waiting" is all-powerful in inducing the result thou aimest at. In PRAYER, continued and earnest, offered in entire dependence upon Jesus thy Mediator, thou wilt find one great and efficacious means of attaining thy renewal in strength. Confess, O my soul, thy own weakness, and thou shalt find thy confession to draw forth a blessing in the way of thy need. . . . Make the *desire* for thy strengthening to be a very constant thought with thee. Let the opinion of thy shortcomings be an ever present one, out of which thou mayest make good thy supplications for energy and might. O, my soul, where is that ardent longing after God and His commu-

nicated power, which *should* be a characteristic of thy daily life? Can He discover the motives of thy heart to be ever pointing in the direction whence thou mayest certainly get help? Dost thou make the need in which thou standest an open and unmistakable one before the world, that all people may discover in thee one who "waits" as a recipient for the strength of God? . . . And yet, hide thy weakness as thou wilt, by delaying the work which requireth the *exhibition* of strength, thou shalt still discover, without doubt, that even in thy unnatural ease and rest thou hast not the power of enjoyment which thou mightest have had if thou hadst laboured in the strength of God and waited for thy rest until thy earthly task had been completed and thy labours done!

Par. 82.] And now discover the wondrous and beautiful results which will accrue to thee as a consequence of this "waiting" upon the Lord. First, it is said unto thee that thou shalt "mount up with eagle's wings." Reanimated by the powers which Christ hath renewed in thee, thou wilt find a pleasure in the exercise of them to which hitherto thou hast been a complete stranger. Had anyone told thee that the heavenly gift of "strength" would enable thee to mount up as the eagle, thou wouldst hardly have conceived it possible! The world and its snares were so heavy upon thee, and weighed thee down so much, that thou hadst no idea of

the celestial flights which awaited thee upon thy renewal, or of the dazzling brilliancy that thy flight would reveal unto thee, when, as the eagle, thou shouldst soar aloft, and gaze in close proximity to Him whose sunbeams made thee glad. . . . This new power of elevating thyself high above all the drawbacks that the world afforded, is what thou mayest hope for after the Divine renewal is completed. Slowly the process may go on, but surely too it shall be accomplished. Thy earthly longings and desires—the mere effects of a soul weakened by sin—shall give place to other and more glorious ones. Thou shalt rise daily to the better understanding of the Godhead, and a clearer perception of thy blessings and privileges. Faith shall be brightened, and hope made more brilliant, the more that thou art deriving all thy strength from the Lord. . . . And towards thy fellow-men thy conduct shall be changed. Thou shalt no longer play the coward because of thy helplessness, but shalt be brave and dauntless in the realization of thy increasing vigour, and be ready to defend and to befriend all those with whom thou art in any way connected, and to use thy strength for them as well as for thyself.

Par. 83.] Thou art further taught that the second result of thy “waiting” upon God shall be that thou shalt “run and not be weary.” Therefore, consider the necessity under which thou art placed to be alert. When Satan seeth

that thou hast received grace and favour, thou mayest be quite sure that he will waylay thee when and where he can. If thou hast inherited a blessing from thy God, the jealous eye of Satan will strive to wrest it from thee. So then thou needest to hold fast that good thing wherewith thou hast been blessed. And as thou art in danger of falling and losing thy strength, if thou stayest in the company of thy tempter, and breathest the foul atmosphere of sin, so thy strength is to hasten from the scene and to *run*. O, my soul, how often hast thou utterly failed in this! . . . But now that thy weakness may have been outdone by the imparted strength of God, thou mayest "run and *not* be weary." Think of this most astonishing and surpassing triumph! Until now its power hath been unknown to thee, but now—ah! no words can tell thee the relief thou hast felt, when thou knewest thine enemy to be so far outrun that there was no immediate danger of his approach! So, my soul, in the extra efforts of thy devotion which thou art called to make at certain times and seasons, if thou hast gained God's strength, thou shalt find it possible to "run and not be weary." . . . And forget not the greatness of the blessing which enableth thee to feel *no fatigue!* In *this* life, how often would thy journeys have been pleasant if thou wert not *tired?* And in the acts of thy devotion, how well mayest thou *test* thy strength and thy power by noticing the result as to whether thou art

weary after thy exertion, or whether thy effort has only made thee to desire *more*.

Par. 84.] And now, my soul, thou hast to notice the effects of the blessing which this Divine imparting of "strength" to thee will afford in thy *daily, common* duties—"thou shalt walk and not faint." Sustained by this strength thou wilt find it *easy* to pursue an every-day life, with a usual amount of cares and sufferings in it, where before it was almost the hardest thing thou didst have to do. Having mightily outstripped thy enemies who pursued thee in thy "running," thou wilt find pleasure in thy quieter and more ordinary duties, because of the sense of safety thou wilt learn to experience. Unheeding the praise of the world, thou wilt go on fully satisfied, if only thou canst gain the smile of God. Unceasing in thy exertions after truth and holiness, thy "strength" will support thee, and enable thee to obtain the victory. . . . Yet, O my soul, thou wilt have continually to remember that it is in "quietness and in confidence" that thou shalt find thy real strength to be *continued* unto thee. Strive after no unusual or unnatural excitement to make thee more powerful in thy daily life, but remember, slowly as thou *walkest*, thou hast the promise that thou shalt not *faint*. Yea, my soul, thou wilt discover it to be a privilege exceeding many others, to be allowed to go slowly and thoughtfully upon thy way (when the

enemy has been outrun) that thou mayest contemplate Him who walked the same road once Himself, to teach thee how to follow undefiled. . . . And so, whether God call thee (like S. John) to see the greater and closer vision of Himself, or whether He bid thee hasten to outrun thy foes, or only call thee to the common duties of a common-life, strive ever to remember that He will find thee strength sufficient for thy need and for thy day, if thou wilt only learn to ask renewal of that which thou hast lost, by humble *waiting* upon Him.



Meditation XIII.

"THE LOVE OF JESUS IN THE HOLY COMMUNION."

"Then Jesus called His disciples unto Him and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."—St. Matthew xv. 32.

Par. 85.] Throw back thy thoughts, O my soul, to the scene of which thou hast so often read in the holy gospel,—the scene connected with the words of thy present meditation. There is JESUS near unto the Sea of Galilee, seated on the top of the mountain, whence (were He even only human) He could behold the distant country round about. Gathered around His sacred Person are many who, because of their various infirmities, their lameness, blindness, dumbness, and their maimed limbs, have come that they may receive the benediction of His Word or touch. Then further picture the utterance of His merciful decrees, as one by one the invalids return to their homes restored to health. . . . Well mayest thou imagine

the *wonder* of the people who throng around Him to behold. They know no earthly power that can compare with His, and their admiration is aroused beyond the limits of an ordinary praise. Gladly does the voice of their united worship ascend as they "glorify God" for His mightiness and Divine compassion. And all the while JESUS is in their midst, accepting as His due the homage of their lips, and continuing His mercy unto each fresh comer who requires aid. And yet my soul, as thou dost picture the scene with which thou hast so long been familiar, canst thou not follow out the continuation of that boundless love in the remainder of the story? . . . Thy Lord had indeed healed the outer man, and made joy to spring up in the place of gloom and misery; He had fulfilled another of the many acts of His mercy and His grace; and now He would not allow the restored to remain feeble in their new health, but would nourish their fresh life with necessary support, and not "send them away fasting."

Par. 86.] Consider the extent of the compassionate regard of Jesus, extending itself beyond the outer man, and taking thought of the condition of the inner. How different to the conduct of the world! How rare to find a loving care of one another *at all* amongst ourselves; but, if it *be* found, how seldom doth it go beyond the actual need? Yet, behold in thy

Lord a regard so loving and so true, that it extended itself unasked to the necessities that were unnamed. (My soul, thou mayest learn compassion for thy brethren in this.) He will feed their bodies because they have been in continued communion with Him for three days, and have a claim upon His love; and He will feed them likewise, because, if He permit them to go hungry away, they will be overcome by weakness when the first excitement of their recovery to health shall have passed. . . . Be amazed also, my soul, at the hardness of the disciples' faith, which—notwithstanding the great miracles that had been shown to them—could not realise the possibility of obtaining food by similar means, and who therefore were in doubt as to the way of obtaining enough bread for so many souls! And take heed lest thou thyself art following in their steps when thou sometimes doubttest as to the possibility of getting what appeareth to be impossible unto thee. Forget not how thy Lord can bless and break the bread of thy poverty, converting it into the sumptuous feast of His benevolent riches. . . . So do thou learn, that in thy Lord there exists a power of *creation* which He can, and will exert on thy behalf, if thou wilt but give Him the opportunity. Bring to Him the seven little loaves and the few fishes of thy possession, and He will mercifully make them capable of supplying the needs and the hunger of all thy four thousand craving wants.

Par. 87.] My soul, thou wilt learn by experience how thy God will make use of thy homely provision, and thy simple material for the fulfilment of His most amazing purposes and miracles. And while He useth them, He will make thee to continue in the common and ordinary pursuits of thy daily life, as when He made the people sit upon the grass to receive His gracious meal. What thou requirest to have, in order that thy morsel of faith, or love, or devotion should increase so largely, is the *benediction* and the *handling* of it by thy Lord. He will send thee thy virtues back again, and supply thee with His heavenly gifts by earthly means, as He vouchsafed to distribute the food to the four thousand by the hands of His disciples. And He will cause thee to be blessed so largely that thou wilt leave thy examples and thy memories as crumbs, to be gathered by those who remain. . . . Then again, O my soul, ponder upon the conduct of thy Saviour after that He hath replenished thy needs, and sent thee away to fulfil thy ordinary tasks and labour. He beareth thee still in *mind*, and He "Himself goeth further" that He may fulfil His work with other souls as well, and give to them the common blessing of His love, as He hath already given thee the same. . . . Thus thou hast realised the scene of this miracle, and perhaps dost wonder what thou canst further learn from its circumstances. Stay, then, in the remainder of this thy meditation to adore in

wondering love the mystical meaning of the whole history. It will do thee good to hear the whisper of God's love behind the rougher, and the outer covering of words; and silently but powerfully mayest thou be instructed in many ways, if thou wilt seek thy inspiration and thy help from Him who knoweth not how to deny thee what thou requirest.

Par. 88.] Thou hast the *sweetest* portion of thy contemplation to arrive at, when thou shalt discover the loving attraction to thy LORD which is contained therein. Remember, O my soul, that JESUS is not content to give thee *only* the earthly blessings of health, or wealth, or temporal happiness of any kind. Thy Lord *yearns* after thee that He may satisfy the cravings of thy *inner* being. By the vigour of health, which He bestoweth on thee, He desireth that thou mayest create a hunger within thyself, after Him and His gifts; a longing for thy full satisfaction in Him who is altogether lovely and more precious than mere words can tell. So then from the "mountain" upon which thou hast seen Him sitting—the high mountain of His pity, He gazes across the sea of His mercy as it lies before Him, the depth and breadth and length whereof thou *canst* not measure. . . . He seeth *thee*, as though thou wert *alone* in the world. Thou art like the crowd upon which He hath gazed, for doth He not behold the *lame* excuses, the *blind* disobedience, the *dumb* tokens of

praise, and the *maimed* spirit of devotion, all alive in thee? But, O my soul, though there can be no doubt that He beholdeth all these, doth He *also* see, that with one consent thy infirmities, in imitation of this crowd, fall down before Him in the homage of adoring faith that knows there is a power to cure? . . . But granted that He doth. Then there goeth forth the word of power and command, and—it is done! done *well!* Thou standest renewed in His might, He expendeth the full dignity of His compassion, He strengtheneth thee when thou callest, and He placeth thee in a place of safety at His side, leading thee on unto Himself, to receive His blessing, and the power of His life. But thou hast not yet attained the *inner* food! Thou art in the *way* to receive it, but as yet thy blessing hath been only the removal of that which thou didst *feel* to be in thy way. Now thou art *ready* to be *fed* as well.

Par. 89.] And He *will* feed thee! He will not send thee away fasting lest thou faint by the way. Yet picture now thy condition before God. Thou hast been drawn away from many evils, and thou hast been cleansed and made strong. Thou wilt have to take heed lest thy comparative strength draw thee into a snare and enslave thee. Thou *canst* not keep up and maintain this divine power that by miracle hath been imparted unto thee, unless thou art also fed. Soon the temporary excitement will

pass away, and thou wilt *feel* thy hunger, but unless thou canst get the food of God, thou wilt doubtless seize that which lieth in thy way, and thy last end may be worse than the first. Thou art pleased at thy superiority to others, and thinkest thou art better than they ; the world will permit thee to think the same, and flatter thee continually. So the shout of a partially acknowledged praise may be heard, and thou mayest think that thou hast all ! . . . Yet JESUS knoweth thy inner want, and having loved thee at the beginning, He will love thee unto the end. So He cannot suffer thee to return to thy home and thy duties, after that He hath called and confirmed thee by His blessing until He hath fed thee with the Bread of Life ? He knoweth that if thou goest away fainting, thou wilt *faint*, thou wilt perish, because thy first renewal was but partial. It was like the waking up of thy body each morning, requiring that thou shouldst *arise* and *clothe* thyself. So too if He hath awakened thee by His mercy, He will nourish thee with His strength. . . . Thou hast proved Him to be a good, and kind, and loving Master, Who was anxious for thy well-being, therefore stay a while before thou returnest to the world, that He may strengthen thee in thy new-found health with His divine and glorious food.

Par. 90.] Think of thyself then, O my soul, in thy ordinary place in the world. JESUS

hath come to thee and healed thee of many things. Now thou hast to make thy honest declaration of gratitude and praise by communicating with Him in His own, *and not thy own* way. He will take the Bread thou eatest in thy daily life, and consecrate and turn it into the very communion of His sacred Body, and thus expanding its powers of nourishment He will feed thee, both in body and in soul. Little indeed doth the Bread appear in thine eyes, but He can make it beyond doubt to fulfil His aim. There were but *seven* loaves to feed four thousand, but His blessing made them all sufficient for their needs, and *more* than enough. And thus my soul He will magnify His mightiness in thy sight, and give thee Himself under the cover of thy poor offering of bread. . . . He will make thee to sit down, and ranging thy desires and aspirations into groups, on the green pastures of His unceasing love, He will send food enough. O my soul how shalt thou offer up thy gratitude? What shalt thou do unto the LORD for all His mercies unto thee? If thou knowest thy need, and understandest the path of thy duty, thou wilt take the Bread that JESUS sends thee, and take the cup of salvation which He giveth thee, and "call upon the Name of the Lord." . . . Otherwise thou shalt "faint in the way." There are dangers and trials from which thou canst *only* escape by being valiant in the fight and strong in thy courage. Thy very weakness may cause

thee to stumble and fall, supposing even that thou hadst no enemies. But surrounded as thou art by *both*, and knowing no help in thyself, unless thou leanest upon JESUS for thy food and thy powers of action, thou *must* miserably fall.

Par. 91.] My soul, do thou very seriously examine thyself to know whether thou art satisfied with the gifts of God's love in thy outer life, or whether thou art seeking fresh vigour in thy fight, by laying hold upon Him who is alone thy succour and thy food. It is quite possible for thee to have *all* thy imperfections softened down, and many an old enemy subdued; but, unless thou wilt permit thy Lord to feed thee with Himself, thou canst have no victory in the end. Art thou in *want* of succour? Canst thou feel that *food* would do thee good? Then, my soul, be like the Prodigal Son, who, because he was hungry, came home that he *might* be fed. Consider how dangerous thy state of emptiness may be. Satan came to Jesus when He was "an hungred;" and if he come to thee when thou art in that state, thou surely shalt be overcome. . . . Delay not thy approach! To-day! Thou knowest not the result of one hour—much less one week, or month, or year! Jesus hath blessed thee so far, and hath been with thee in thy troubles, and now with growing anxiety He careth for thee so greatly, that He saith, "I will not send thee

away fasting, lest thou faint by the way." Canst thou refuse that anxiety on thy behalf, and turn an ungrateful ear to Him who hath borne with thee so long? . . . So often hath thy state been such that thou didst almost *fear* to draw nigh to the altar of thy God and receive His Body and His Blood. But why shouldst thou reject the feast any longer? If thou wilt turn again, and in memory of His blessing thus far, permit him to nourish thee, thou mayest be happy in His love, while He, who hath "gone further" in His ascension to His Father, will look upon thee with His beaming smile, as He nameth thee for good in His sweet intercession.



Praise ye the Lord.



Verses

*Intended to be repeated at the pauses in each of
the Meditations to which they belong.*

MEDITATION I.

“Thy walls are made of precious stones ;
Thy bulwarks diamond square ;
Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
Exceeding rich and rare.”

MEDITATION II.

“While the wicked are confounded,
Doomed to flames of woe unbounded,
Call me, with Thy saints surrounded.”

MEDITATION III.

“Nay, alas ! thou guilty creature,
Hast thou, then, forgot ?
Jesus *waited* long to know thee,
Now He knows thee not !”

MEDITATION IV.

“Oh, what if we are Christ’s
Is earthly shame or loss,
Bright shall the crown of glory be
When we have borne the Cross.”

MEDITATION V.

"Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid
And home, rejoicing brought me."

MEDITATION VI.

"The kingdom that I seek
Is Thine ; so let the way
That leads to it be Thine,
Else I must surely stray."

MEDITATION VII.

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee,
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee !"

MEDITATION VIII.

"Hope of our hearts, O Lord, appear,
Thou glorious Star of Day ;
Shine forth and chase the dreary night,
With all our tears away."

MEDITATION IX.

"Come Heavenly Wisdom from on high,
And give us that we need :
Unloose our ear, unseal our eye,
And make us Thine indeed !"

MEDITATION X.

"We love the Word of Life,
The Word that tells of peace,
Of comfort in the strife,
And joys that never cease."

MEDITATION XI.

"We bear the burden of the day,
And often toil seems dreary,
But labour ends with sunset ray,
And rest is for the weary."

* * * * *

"By Thee the souls of men are fed,
With gifts of grace supernal ;
Thou who dost give us daily bread
Give us the Bread eternal."

MEDITATION XII.

"Put thou thy trust in God,
In duty's path go on ;
Walk in His strength with faith and hope,
So shall thy work be done."

MEDITATION XIII.

“ Bread of Sweetness, ever holy,
Full art Thou of pure delight ;
Saviour, born of Maiden lowly,
King art Thou of perfect might.”



VENI CREATOR.

The following beautiful hymn is suggested for frequent use with the Prayers at page 2.

“Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire ;
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy seven-fold gifts impart :
Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love ;
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight :

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of Thy grace :
Keep far our foes, give peace at home ;
Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.
Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of Both, to be but One ;
That, through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song :
Praise to Thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.’



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